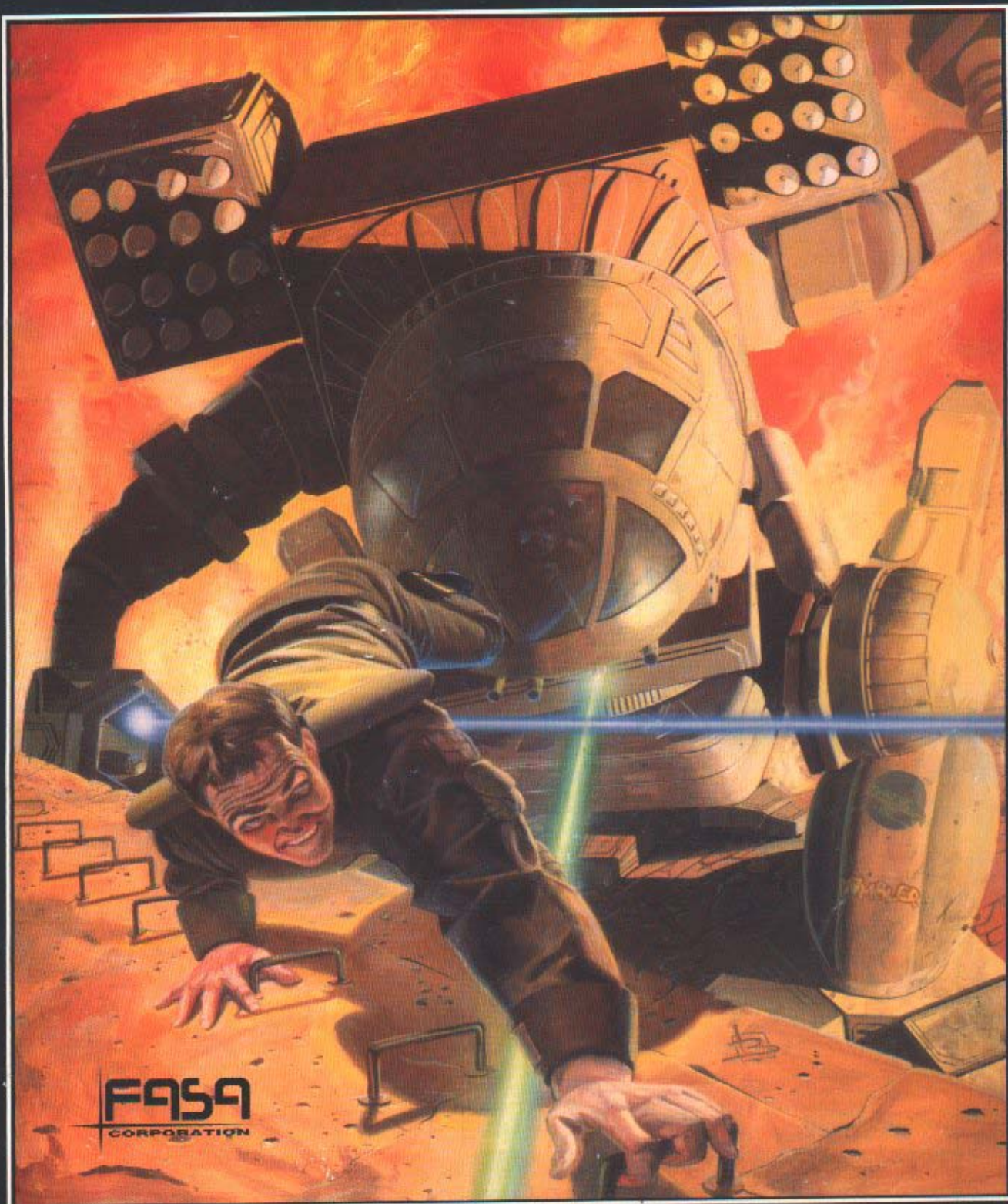


HOT SPOTS

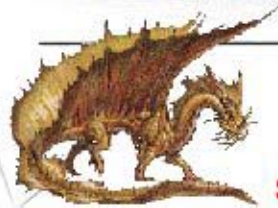
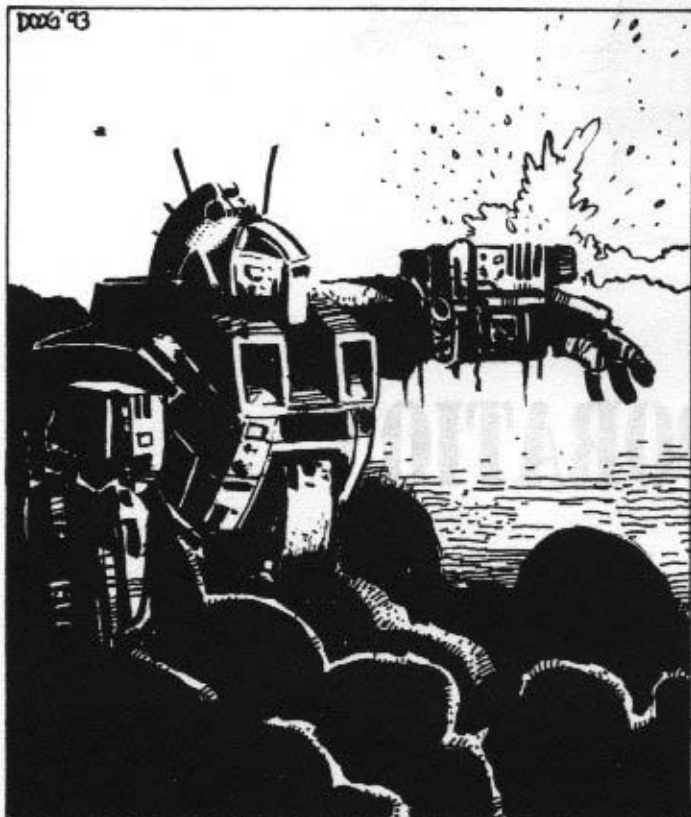
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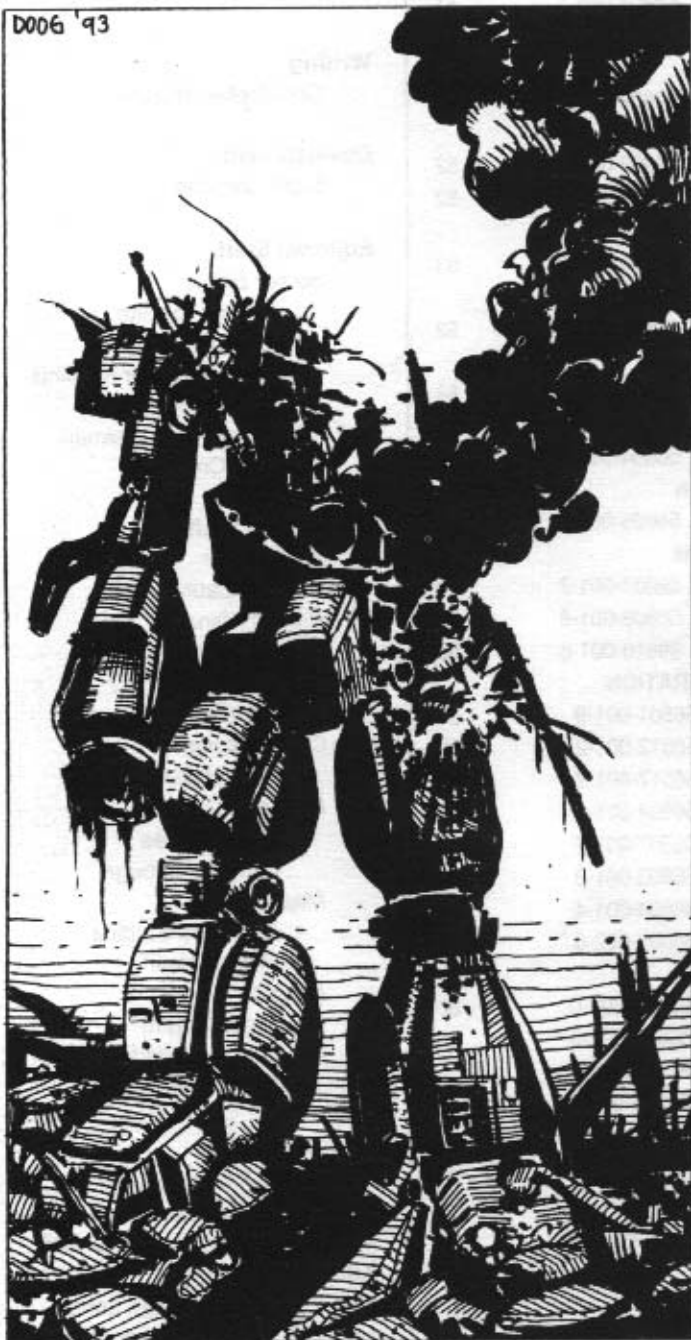
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INTRODUCTION



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Hot Spots is a companion piece to **Mercenary's Handbook: 3055**, designed to help the gamemaster create campaigns for the BattleTech universe. This product does not provide complete game scenarios. Instead, each mission briefing provides enough information about the current situation on various planets through-

out the Inner Sphere to allow the gamemaster to customize his own campaign.

Hot Spots is divided into two books. The **Gamemasters Book** provides all the rules and other game information needed to use this companion piece, gamemaster information on each potential mercenary contract, and seven mapsheets. The **Hot Spots** book consists of 64 mission briefings for mercenary contracts that can be used individually or as part of a campaign.

To use **Hot Spots**, the gamemaster should own the **BattleTech Compendium; MechWarrior, Second Edition; BattleTroops; BattleSpace**; and/or **BattleForce**, depending on the type of campaign being played. The gamemaster may use the **BattleTech Map Sets 2, 3, or 4** if he does not wish to create his own maps. Some mission briefings include detailed maps and entries for opposing forces, terrain and such. These may serve as models for the remaining briefings, where these categories are intentionally left open-ended to allow the gamemaster to tailor the missions to his group. The **Intelligence Operations Handbook** provides useful historical background and a framework for the current situation of certain contracts.

The **Gamemasters Book** explains the mission briefing and gamemaster mission briefing formats. Each mission briefing provides the pertinent information about the job, including the name of the planet from which the mission will launch and any background information the employer provides. The gamemaster mission briefings fill in all the information the employer prefers to withhold from the players and describes the opposition they will meet. The **Gamemasters Book** also explains how to present a contract to the players' unit and discusses the factors a mercenary unit must consider when deciding whether or not to accept a contract.

The **Gamemasters Book** includes seven mapsheets for use with various missions. This book also provides an alphabetical listing of all the planets designated as mission bases or targets, along with their political affiliation, offering an easy reference tool for those gamemasters interested in running a campaign on a particular planet.

The **Force Archetypes** section gives the gamemaster a template for creating opposing forces based on random die rolls. Because garrison troops and pirate raiders are rarely in pristine condition, this section also provides a table to determine initial random damage to opposing forces. The **Gamemasters Book** also provides a synopsis of the current political situation in each realm of the Inner Sphere that the gamemaster can use to give the players a quick rundown of the political climate in which their employer is working.

The **Hot Spots** book contains 64 mission briefings and is designed so that the gamemaster can easily photocopy each mission briefing he decides to use and physically hand that information to the players as an official document.

INTRODUCTION



THE CONTRACT



The gamemaster can use the mission briefings provided in **Hot Spots** to create contracts binding the players' unit to a single mission or an extended campaign. This section begins by providing a synopsis of the process, then explains each step in greater detail.

The gamemaster should read through the mission briefings and choose one that fits into his current campaign, then cross-refer the contract number to the gamemaster briefing for that mission in the **Gamemasters Book** for further information. The contracts in the **St. Ives Compact** and **Miscellaneous Employers** sections are presented in ascending numerical order. In the **Federated Commonwealth** and **Draconis Combine** sections, the contracts appear in ascending numerical order within the different military districts of each realm. The **Capellan Confederation** section contains two parts: **Confederation worlds** and **Unaffiliated Worlds**; contracts are presented in ascending order in each part.

After he chooses a mission, the gamemaster should become thoroughly familiar with the **Behind the Scenes** section of the gamemaster briefing of the mission he intends to incorporate into his campaign. This is the real situation. The gamemaster can use this knowledge to design random encounters during the mission. The gamemaster may also decide to give the players certain bits of this hidden information, or arrange for them to learn it through investigation or even casual conversation. The gamemaster briefing in the **Gamemasters Book** also includes a section called **Opposition**. This section usually lists the opposing forces. In general, the gamemaster should feel free to customize the opposition of every mission to suit his group's forces.

When the gamemaster has fully integrated the contract mission into his campaign, he arranges for a representative of the employer to contact the unit. At this meeting, the gamemaster

supplies the players with the mission briefing, and the negotiations begin. If it seems appropriate to the group's style of play, the players should sign a physical contract.

The players may want to choose their own contract from those provided. If the gamemaster agrees to their choice, he should feel free to create as many obstacles to getting off Harlech as necessary to give himself enough time to prepare the scenario. The simplest stall is to make that employer's representative currently unavailable, but may also involve the player characters taking on an "interim" contract (a scenario the gamemaster is currently prepared to run).

The gamemaster may create additional mission briefings using the information provided in the **Intelligence Operations Handbook** and **Mercenary's Handbook: 3055**, using the briefings given here as a template.

MISSION BRIEFINGS

The unit leader or negotiator should obtain and review a mission briefing for each contract and relay the pertinent information to the rest of the unit. The unit negotiates the details of the contract based on the information provided. The **Hot Spots** book provides 64 mission briefings designed to be handed to the players. The **Gamemasters Book** includes a blank contract that can be photocopied and filled out for the players to sign.

Each mission briefing provides the following information.

CONTRACT NUMBER

The Hiring Hall uses this number to categorize and record each contract. The number includes the realm from which the

contract originates, the date on which the contract was recorded, the numerical order in which the contract was recorded on that particular day, and a validating code number.

DRAGOONS RATING

Each mercenary unit registered with the Hiring Hall receives a rating from Wolf's Dragoons that gives potential employers an idea of the unit's character and experience. Most employers want a particular level of unit for specific missions. The Dragoons Rating allows both parties to negotiate based on the same criteria. For example, if a unit does not match exactly what the employer is looking for, the employer may choose to continue to look, to pay a lower-rated unit less, or pay less up-front for a particular mission. See p. 99 in the **Mercenary's Handbook: 3055 (Merc Hdbk)** for directions on determining a unit's Dragoons Rating.

EMPLOYER

The employer represents the planetary body, government, corporation, or person offering the job.

LOCATION

The location is the planet on which the action of the mission will take place.

DAYS TO JUMP POINT

Days to Jump Point indicates how far a DropShip must travel at normal acceleration from the JumpShip's entry point into a system to reach an orbital position around a planet.

TYPE OF ACTION

Type of Action describes the mission action in terms of one of the following types of missions: Garrison Duty, Cadre (Training) Duty, Recon Raid, Retainer, Pirate Hunting, Objective Raid, Planetary Assault, Diversionary Raid, Extraction Raid, Relief Duty, Defensive Campaign, Riot Duty, Security Duty, and Guerrilla Warfare. See the **Merc Hdbk**, pp. 103-105, for descriptions of each type of action.

LENGTH OF CONTRACT

This number represents how long the unit must stay in action on the planet to fulfill the terms of the contract.

UNIT TYPE

This designation indicates the type of unit the employer wants for the job. As with the Dragoons Rating, this point can be negotiated. The players' unit should take care not to accept a mission beyond their capabilities, however. For example, an infantry unit negotiating for a job advertised as requiring BattleMechs will make a lot more money than with a standard infantry contract, but such a mission would likely prove suicidal.

UNIT SIZE

This is the size of the unit the employer considers appropriate for the job. This point may also be negotiated, but the same precautions mentioned in the Unit Type section above also apply here.

PAY RATE

Based on the payment formula beginning on p. 106, **Merc Hdbk**, this number represents the range of what the employer is willing to pay for the preferred unit. The gamemaster can determine the initial payment offer the group's unit should receive for any given contract by using the **Merc Hdbk** rules to set a base payment and the following guidelines to create an initial offer. Payment is subject to negotiation. If the unit being hired is not the preferred unit type, apply the appropriate modifiers from the Payment Negotiation guidelines.

INITIAL OFFER TABLE

Pay Rating	Percent of Base Payment
Poor	65
Fair	85
Average	95
Good	120
Excellent	150

Payment Negotiation Modifiers

Reduce the offer by 10 % for a unit with a Dragoons rating of B; 20 % for a C unit, and so on.

Add or subtract 20 % of the initial offer for each type of unit that separates the requested type and the offered type. For example, if the employer wants an armored unit and the negotiator offers a special forces unit, subtract 40 percent from the initial payment offer. Base the percentage added or subtracted on the following order of units: Special Forces, Infantry, Armor, BattleMech.

Modify the offer according to the unit's size as well. For example, if the employer wants a battalion (3 companies) and the negotiator offers one company, the employer pays only one-third the initial payment offer. A completion bonus may bring the payment up to the contract's original offer.

SUPPORT

Support represents the amount of money that the employer will provide to cover the unit's technical support and battle damage costs. A unit listing under this heading represents the troop support the employer will provide for the mercenary unit.

TRANSPORT

The employer will cover this amount of transportation costs to and from the mission location.

SALVAGE RIGHTS

This indicates how much battlefield salvage the employer intends to share with the unit.

COMMAND

This information names who is in charge in the operation.

SITUATION

The situation section describes the current situation on the mission planet and the nature of the mission. This information can be learned by following local news reports and speaking with the employer or his representative.

If the players conduct reconnaissance or intelligence missions before accepting a contract or before leaving on the mission, the gamemaster may use contacts to relay information to the players about the current political situation in the employer's or target realm. A synopsis of the state of the Inner Sphere and each realm appears in the **Current Political Situation** section, p. 28. For more details, see the **Intelligence Operations Handbook**.

Some mission briefings include maps. While these rarely show the details of the terrain, the player characters will get a general idea of what they are up against.

GAMEMASTER BRIEFINGS

The **Gamemasters Book** provides a gamemaster briefing for every mission, each identified by the contract number. The gamemaster briefing provides the rest of the information needed to complete the mission, including everything the employer is not telling the unit, as well as the opposing forces the unit must defeat (when appropriate). The **Gamemasters Book** also provides rules for generating opposing forces using the Lance and Unit Generation Tables, p. 21.

The gamemaster briefing for each mission includes the following information.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This section describes all the events and information that the employer fails to tell the characters. This is often information crucial to the unit's survival that may only be discovered if the characters perform intelligence or reconnaissance operations before leaving on the mission. The information in this section will greatly affect the unit's experience on the mission.

OPPOSITION

This is the unit's opponent(s). The opposition may be a Force Archetype, as described beginning on p. 14, or may be a specific unit or larger force. The gamemaster should run an appropriate configuration of the specified unit when one is supplied. If the gamemaster briefing lists an archetype for the opposition, the gamemaster may use that archetype or create his own opposition for the characters.

Specific opposing forces are listed according to the following descriptions.

Size

Indicates the opposition's strength.

Unit Quality

Indicates the overall quality of the opposing forces. As in real life, most units include troops of varying quality: this number provides an average.

'Mech Weight

Indicates the average weight of any opposing BattleMechs. Keep in mind that few units are made up uniformly of one weight of 'Mech.

Aerospace

Indicates the opposition's aerospace capability. If an opposing unit is fielding aerospace units, this entry describes the aerospace strength and type of fighter (conventional or aerospace).

Fighter Weight

Indicates the average weight of any opposing fighters.

Armor

Indicates the unit size and weight of any opposing armor forces.

Infantry

Indicates the unit size, mode of transportation, and primary weapons of any opposing infantry forces.

Tech Level

Indicates the technology level to which the opposing force has access. A tech level of 3025 means the opposition uses only standard pre-Star League technology. Tech level 3050 means the opposition has obtained rediscovered Star League-era devices. Tech level 3055 indicates the opposing force has access to new designs using Star League tech. Clan tech is self-explanatory. An opposing force may not use any tech level higher than the level listed.

THE MISSION

Mercenary units must consider many factors before signing a contract for a mission. Generally speaking, some employers are better to work for than others. Payment, transportation, and unit size all represent important considerations, and even other mercs and the local citizens may make a difference in contract negotiations or the final result of a mission. The discussion of these issues in this section allows gamemasters to factor in these considerations when choosing contracts for their group's unit and provides a frame of reference for the gamemaster to use when sending his mercenary group through the job-search process.

MAKING THE OFFER

Any unit currently on Outreach that is rated and posted on the Hiring Hall boards (see **Finding Work**, p. 12) can be approached for employment in one of two ways. Employers can contact merc units up-front and in person, or, more commonly, through a liaison.

An up-front offer is not necessarily a bad offer. An employer approaching a unit up-front may simply be inexperienced at hiring mercenaries, or may be in a hurry.

The more common method of contacting a merc unit is through a liaison, sometimes a member of the employer's staff, or a freelance contract agent employed by the unit. Many mercenary units retain a liaison of their own to deal with employer's liaisons, or designate a unit member to serve in that position. A unit posted on the Hiring Hall boards usually posts their liaison's number as the contact number. Interested employers contact the liaison, who in turn informs the unit of the potential job. If the unit wishes to meet with the employer, the liaison will re-contact the employer to set up the meeting place and time.

Units listed on an unofficial bulletin board usually post a direct number or location to contact, rather than working through a liaison.

Special forces operatives prefer to deal directly with potential employers to minimize the number of people who know their identity.

EMPLOYERS

Every employer offers various advantages and disadvantages—any merc unit that has accepted more than one mission knows this to be a fact. Employers generally fall into one of the following five categories, each listed with the advantages and disadvantages of employment.

Inner Sphere Governments

The ruling Houses of the Successor States are the most frequent employers of mercenary units. The biggest advantage of working for an Inner Sphere government is the pay. These contracts offer the highest payment and the most visibility. Units that win major battles earn notoriety for their victory, and begin to establish a good reputation. The main disadvantage to working with Inner Sphere governments is the relatively long-term contracts these employers require. Several shorter-term contracts are usually more lucrative than one or two long-term contracts, and longer contracts may keep a merc unit out of the market so long that prospective employers will forget about them. Contracts with Inner Sphere governments are also much harder to break—if a mission goes bad, a merc unit may find it difficult to cut its losses. When working for an Inner Sphere government, reputation may also be a disadvantage. If a unit fails to complete a highly visible mission, everyone knows about it, and that failure could hurt the unit's chances of getting hired again at a favorable rate of pay. House governments also tend to deny or severely limit a merc unit's salvage rights. The Federated Commonwealth and Draconis Combine particularly, and even the Free Rasalhague Republic routinely insist on ownership of all captured Clan technology. Only the most highly trusted units can successfully negotiate this point.

Planetary Governments

Mercenary units working for planetary governments owe their loyalty to that ruling body and no one else, not even the planet's Successor State. The biggest advantage of working for a planetary government is the relative safety of the mission. Win or lose, a unit's reputation usually remains intact after working for a planetary government, as even local wars rarely excite interest beyond the planet itself. Working for planetary governments offers several disadvantages: the pay is not always good, as most planets cannot afford to pay as much as the House governments. Supplies may also become a problem, as only the most prominent planets can maintain a regular schedule of supply shipments. This factor alone could cripple a unit. To balance the relatively low pay and unreliable supply lines, many planetary governments offer generous salvage rights, though even this concession is becoming more rare as advanced technology makes its way onto the battlefield. Units considering contracts with planetary governments should keep in mind that planetary governments may hire mercs to defend their planet against the "incursions" of their own House. That House may be reluctant in the future to hire a mercenary unit that fought against it.

Businesses

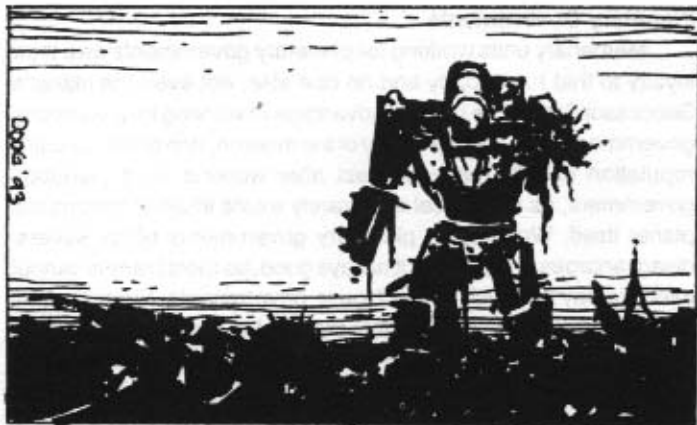
More and more businesses are hiring mercenaries every day. Raids on transport ships have become almost commonplace, and mercs are guaranteed to see action on such a mission. Working for a business or corporation also offers the advantage of travel to the Inner Sphere's most exotic places and unique planets. Such wide-ranging travel allows the unit to establish contacts and make important friends across known space. Corporate pay is fairly good, but because these employers are businessmen, contract negotiations can be tricky. Units must take extra care to negotiate a fair deal. Another disadvantage is that salvage rights from businesses are almost non-existent—these employers view salvage as an opportunity to make a profit.

Merc units should also be aware that the majority of attacks on business interests occur in space while cargo is in transit. While this type of conflict is the aerjock's dream, it can be the MechWarrior's nightmare. MechWarriors unskilled at zero-G warfare will find themselves at a severe disadvantage against opponents who make their living through piracy.

Periphery Realms

While employment with the major Periphery realms offers most of the same advantages and disadvantages as working for the Inner Sphere governments, the smaller powers offer very little to attract mercenaries. Many cannot afford to pay much, with the exception of the Marian Hegemony, but sign over salvage rights almost completely.

Contracts with minor Periphery powers provide great flexibility, and a unit forced to break a contract rarely suffers even minor repercussions. Many new merc units work for Periphery employers to gain experience before signing on with the big leagues.



Other Employers

Many other organizations employ all types of mercenary units. Other mercenary units may subcontract all or part of a mission; crime lords may need extra muscle for legitimate endeavors; individual or coalitions of nobles may hire mercs to achieve a private ambition; special events organizers may hire mercs as security forces. Negotiating contracts and then dealing with these unique employers throughout the course of a mission can be a strange but rewarding experience. It is difficult to map out the advantages and disadvantages of working with non-standard organizations, as each is unique.

TRANSPORTATION

A merc unit's greatest weakness at the negotiating table may be transportation. While some merc units are fortunate enough to own DropShips, JumpShips, or both, most do not. Transporting a 'Mech unit is particularly expensive, and the larger the unit, the more expensive it is. Employers may devote the largest part of their available resources to covering the cost of transportation, leaving little for purchasing supplies or paying the units. Unless they are careful, units may fall into the same trap. Employers who pay better wages might not pay transportation costs to the place of employment. Though the unit might be able to cover its own transportation costs, doing so may drain the unit's cash reserves, leaving the unit strapped.

Expensive as it is, units that shop around can find relatively good rates for transportation. Transport companies and Free Traders travel to Outreach on a regular basis to offer their services to merc units. Fare wars are commonplace, and smart units can use this competition to their advantage. The disadvantage of traveling on cargo ships not designed specifically to transport 'Mechs is that traveling conditions for both men and 'Mechs may be uncomfortable. Every merc can share at least one story of his entire unit bedding down in a cargo hold next to the ship's engine. Lack of proper repair facilities might also pose a problem, and the travel itself may cause damage to the BattleMechs.

As undesirable as these conditions may seem, accepting those conditions may be the only way a unit can find a cheap ride to their destination. And it is worth noting that employers who cover the cost of transportation may strike a deal for the same conditions.

SCRATCHING OUT A LIVING

Mustering out to become a merc wasn't quite what I expected. I guess I was too used to traveling on Free Worlds military ships. But here I was, my unit and I sharing a hollowed-out section of a commercial *Union Class DropShip* with a lot of other cargo. You know, I never realized how uncomfortable it was to sleep on metal, and our straw mats didn't really help much.

I felt sorry for my fellow mercs, but I almost felt sorrier for our 'Mechs, crammed into the various cargo holds of the ship. They'd stuck mine into a hold filled with chickens en route to Ingersoll.

We hadn't even crossed the border to Capellan space before the DropShip was attacked by raiders. What they were doing this far into the interior I'll never know, but the battle was scary. The DropShip took several hits, a couple of them near the cargo hold where my 'Mech was stored. We escaped, and the captain assured me that my 'Mech was safe.

When they dropped us off on Pella I got my first good look at my *Catapult*. It was covered with feathers. Apparently, one of the bandit's hits had wiped out a bunch of the chickens. Unfortunately, most of the chickens were wiped on my 'Mech.

Before I had a chance to clean them off and make the rest of the unit stop laughing, we got the message that our employers wanted us to march through the city right away so that the citizens of Pella could see their new defenders. Needless to say, we made quite an impression, parading through the capital city led by a feathered *Catapult*.

Ever since that day, though, I swear I get more distance when I jump the thing.

—From *Voices of Outreach: Interviews with Mercenaries*, Tikonov Press, June 3054.

UNIT SIZE

The mission briefings in the *Hot Spots* book specify a certain size of unit for each mission. This requirement serves two purposes. It allows the gamemaster to choose appropriate missions for his group to undertake based on the unit's current strength and configuration. It also serves as a guideline for assigning opposition to various mission types. Conducting stealthy recon on a nearby city would not require a regiment, and a company-sized unit would prove woefully inadequate to undertake a planetary assault.

If the gamemaster or players want to undertake a mission for which the group's unit is too small, the gamemaster may deal with the problem one of two ways. He can augment the characters' force by having the employer hire more mercenaries. This solution

causes other complications; the characters must work with troops who probably operate differently than they do, and the command structure may become muddled. The character's unit may have autonomous command, but the additional merc unit may enjoy that same freedom.

The gamemaster may also choose to simply reduce the strength of the opposition, easily accomplished using an archetype force. This option allows the gamemaster to scale the opposition to better match the size and capabilities of his player's unit.

PAYMENT

Mercenaries usually receive payment from their employer every month plus a monthly supply allowance. Ninety percent of the time, the unit is paid in House bills rather than the more stable and universally accepted C-bills. Only the merc units with the biggest reps can insist on payment in C-bills. While House currency usually holds its value, mercenary units that travel a lot may fall victim to fluctuating exchange rates, and the unit's profits or operating funds may suffer. The Currency Conversion Table shows the current exchange rate between House bills and C-bills. The number in parentheses is the ratio.

Employers short on cash themselves may offer to pay the characters less but give them premium salvage rights. While this arrangement allows the unit to build up its backstock of spare parts and supplies, it does not put cash in their pockets. The unit may choose to sell the salvage for cash, but by doing so deplete their supplies. All merc units try to strike the delicate balance between pay and salvage, but that balance is rarely achieved.

MISSION HEADACHES

All mercenary units share a few common problems, including supplies, local reaction to their presence, bad fighting conditions, and so on. A gamemaster who wishes to liven up a mission or campaign can take advantage of these aspects of being a mercenary to better direct the flow of play. These mission headaches can

test the unit's capabilities and force them to use more creative strategies and battle tactics.

SUPPLIES

Supplies are almost always a problem, no matter who a unit is working for. Availability of supplies becomes a bigger problem with small employers such as minor planetary governments or obscure organizations. Inner Sphere governments and trading cartels usually have more control over the flow of supplies through familiarity with the system and sheer purchasing power.

Unreliable supply lines can result in very late shipments, incomplete orders, or receipt of the wrong order entirely. Some supplies may simply be scarce, particularly current weapons, most of which go to units stationed on the Clan border. Poor supply lines present a perfect opportunity for the gamemaster to test the unit's strategic skills—for example, can the unit compensate for fighting in half-repaired 'Mechs?

THE LOCALS

The local population can be a great help or hindrance to a mercenary unit. Many backwater worlds have never seen a real military unit, only pirates, and will be amazed by the characters and their war machines. Other worlds have seen much too much warfare and too many untrustworthy mercenaries, and will treat the arriving characters with contempt rivaling that of a Rasalhagian. The players' unit may be greeted with open arms or by full-scale riots.

REGULAR FORCES

Employers often hire mercenaries to supplement the regular forces already stationed on a planet. While House troops are considered professional soldiers, they sometimes fail to behave professionally, especially if they resent the arriving mercs. If the arrival of reinforcements makes it look as if the regulars could not do their job, they may vent their frustrations by challenging the mercs to duels. This puts the mercs into a no-win situation, and the

CURRENCY CONVERSION TABLE

	C-Bill	Kurita	Federated Commonwealth	Marik	Liao
C-Bill	—	1.25 (5/4)	1.00 (1/1)	1.60 (8/5)	2.50 (5/2)
Kurita	0.80 (4/5)	—	0.80 (4/5)	1.28 (9/7)	2.00 (2/1)
Steiner-Davion	1.00 (1/1)	0.80 (4/5)	—	1.60 (8/5)	2.50 (5/2)
Marik	0.63 (5/8)	0.78 (7/9)	0.63 (5/8)	—	1.56 (11/7)
Liao	0.40 (2/5)	0.50 (1/2)	0.40 (2/5)	0.64 (7/11)	—

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regulars' superior officers may refuse to intervene if they also dislike the mercenaries.

OTHER MERCS

Employers sometimes hire several merc units for the same mission. This may cause the same kind of strife as when mercs and garrison forces must work together. Duels between mercs may escalate into feuds, and then into debilitating loss of life. Unscrupulous mercenaries may even attempt to steal supplies from other merc units.

WEATHER

Many Inner Sphere worlds suffer extreme weather conditions ranging from constant sub-zero winter climes to baking deserts where little life or water exists. Many planets suffer the effects of ravaging storms, sometimes as part of a constant, battering weather system; sometimes as quick, brutal storms that rival the mightiest hurricanes. As proved during Kai Allard-Liao's struggle to defeat the Clans on Twycross, the weather can play a crucial role in a battle.

TERRAIN

A planet's geography can also be a boon or bane to a merc unit. Mountain ranges may stretch for thousands of kilometers in width and length. Steaming, overgrown jungles filled with natural predators can cause constant trouble for an infantry squad on patrol. An open plain or desert can spell disaster for a MechWarrior looking for cover in a damaged 'Mech. Bad weather and rough terrain combined can create nearly impossible fighting conditions.

The gamemaster should use his imagination to flesh out planets that the unit is stationed on or traveling to. The external conditions that the characters must endure can effectively set the mood for the mission and make the gaming session more enjoyable for everyone involved.

FINDING WORK

The mercenary's highest priority is to find work, because a mercenary without a contract is just a man with a 'Mech. Statistics show that the majority of mercenary units go bankrupt within five years. Even in times when it seems like everyone is hiring, mercs of all types still have trouble landing a good job.

On the mercenary's world of Outreach, the best way for a mercenary unit to find work is to be rated according to the Dragoon Rating System. This rating is the Dragoons' shorthand for a detailed evaluation of each rated mercenary unit based on the unit's track record, their commanding officer, and equipment. This rating functions in a similar manner to an academic grading system, with A being the best and D being the lowest rating. The Dragoons also rate special forces agents and scouts.

For a fee of 85 C-bills per month, a unit's name, size, and rating is constantly posted on the myriad Hiring Hall screens that employers study regularly to determine the most likely candidates for their missions.

If a merc unit cannot or chooses not to obtain a rating, they can post the unit's vital statistics on the many unofficial bulletin boards surrounding the area outside the Hiring Hall. The Dragoons do not endorse either the units or employers who use this hiring system, but also do nothing to actively discourage it. Merc units should note that most employers who hire units from the unofficial bulletin boards need forces to perform more discreet (illegal) work.

Units need not go to Outreach to look for work. The Dragoons gladly accommodate those units that simply transmit the necessary information to Outreach via HPG to have their unit rated and placed on the Hiring Hall boards. Units that cannot get to Outreach

who want to be listed on the unofficial bulletin boards must have a contact on the world to do so.

Mercenary units can also find work off Outreach by using contacts (if the unit has established any). Contacts provide a good resource for connecting potential employers and willing mercs. People who perform this service for a living are known as contract agents. Contract agents can be found on almost every planet in the Inner Sphere, but the best ones work on Outreach.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MISSION

Mercenary units may find themselves in the enviable position of choosing between several offers of employment. When all other factors are equal, some missions simply may not be the right kind of work for the unit. For example, the Eridani Light Horse adheres strictly to many Star League traditions of honor and fairness, and only accept contracts from employers who also do so. The Waco Rangers refuse to work for any employer also employing Wolf's Dragoons. It's a fairly safe bet that the Rangers will not be working anywhere in Federated Commonwealth space for some time.

A unit must decide if it has any standards for employment. Will the unit work only for a certain House? Will the unit accept work on the Clan border? Will it work for crime syndicates or perform any illegal activities? Only the unit's members can answer these questions. A unit just starting out might consider standards for employment a luxury they can ill afford, but a unit's reputation may depend on the type of work it accepts.

SIGNING A CONTRACT

Many mercs do not feel secure without several copies of a good, solid contract under their feet. Other mercenaries and employers seal agreements with only a handshake and the conviction that both parties will honor their word. Both are time-honored methods for accomplishing a task, but both offer certain pitfalls. Contracts are likely to contain loopholes, which usually benefit the employer. By definition, contracts allow a unit little flexibility (for example, in bailing out of a deteriorating situation), but do guarantee a unit steady employment for a specified period of time.

Agreements sealed by other methods allow the unit greater flexibility to set their own timetable and course of action, but generally offer minimal security. Employers often feel free to hang the unit out to dry when the going gets rough, stranding their employees in some backwater without hope of compensation. Sadly, this situation most often afflicts units who accept contracts to perform illegal work, and the results can damage the unit's reputation or land them in prison.

Merc units must give careful consideration to their potential employers. Does the employer care about whom he hires or does he just want the job done at any cost, with no complaining? The actual facts of a situation notwithstanding, an employer's perception of his hirelings can seriously affect the unit's rep. Legitimate employers usually check a unit's references before offering a contract; a previous employer's report may not be all good news.

Lord Bastor pressed the Answer button on the keypad near his computer. A slight burst of static produced a three-dimensional image of a man in the center of his desk. Though only a half-meter-tall holo, the man had a commanding presence.

"Greetings, Lord Jason Bastor. I am Duke Haley Allowton, in exile from the planet Leskovik. I am sending this message to ask your assistance in a matter that deeply concerns me.

"I am considering hiring the mercenary unit known as the Salast Brigade for a mission on my homeworld. As it is currently held by the Jade Falcons, this is a dangerous mission indeed."

A chair appeared beside the image of the Duke, and he sat down. A table holding a drink of some sort appeared at his elbow. The Duke picked up the glass and continued.

"I understand that you recently employed this same unit. As we are fellow nobles under the wise rule of our good Archon Prince, I would be in your debt if you could supply me with information as to the nature and manners of the unit. Data on their combat performance would also be appreciated."

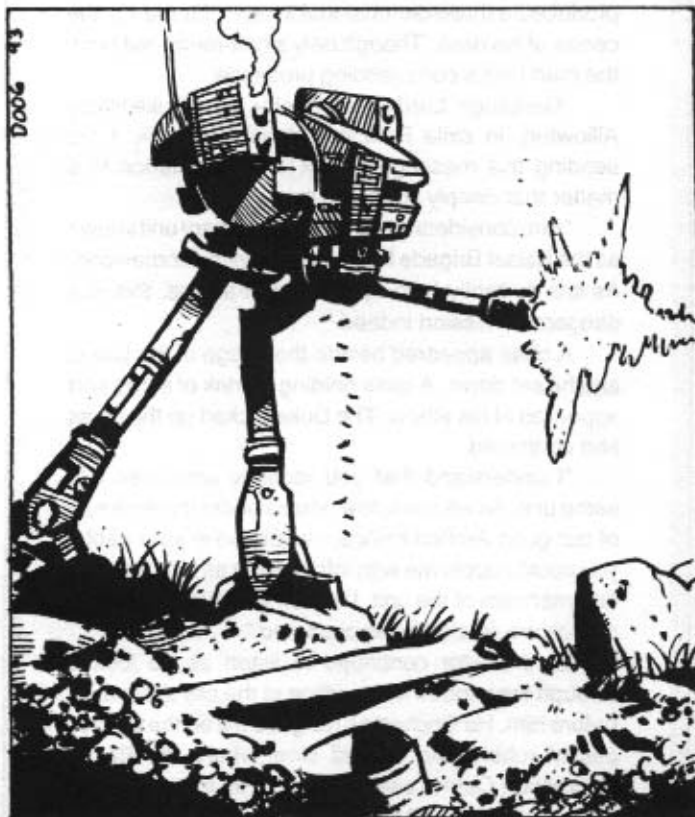
Lord Bastor continued to listen as he looked through the window of his office at the city spread out before him. He flinched as his gaze fell on the blasted pile of rubble and twisted steel where the Bastor Recreation Center used to stand. His face tightened into a mask of fury as he remembered how the building was destroyed by the mercs he had hired to defend against a pirate attack. Although many witnesses had reported that the destruction of the center was an accident of war and largely the fault of the raider bandits, Lord Bastor refused to accept that weak excuse. He knew in his heart that the unit had destroyed the complex under cover of the pirate attack in retaliation for late payment. The noble returned his attention to the holo image of the Duke.

"I hope that you will reply to my request as soon as possible, as time is of the essence. Please feel free to charge the HPG transmission to my personal accounts—I have already made arrangements with ComStar to do so. I look forward to hearing from you." The Duke's image smiled, then disappeared in another burst of static.

Lord Bastor stared blankly at his desk for several moments, then reached for the keypad again. Pushing a button, he spoke in a hard voice. "Bentley, prepare the car. I need to transmit a message."

—From *So Long Salast*, a story by Micah Clastolé, Tharkad Publishing, 3052

FORCE ARCHETYPES



This section provides everything the gamemaster needs to generate enemy troops for any mission. The gamemaster uses the archetype and 'Mech/vehicle tables to create opposition forces for the characters' unit to encounter during a mission. The gamemaster can create an even more realistic scenario by using the Random Damage Table to quickly apply wear and tear from previous actions to opposing forces.

To randomly determine the unit archetype, the gamemaster chooses an archetype and rolls 2D6 to determine the unit configuration; vehicle weight, or unit quality. To choose the conventional vehicle or 'Mech type each lance contains, the gamemaster may choose his own or use the Lance tables provided beginning on p. 21. The gamemaster may also randomly choose 'Mechs by separating a deck of **BattleMech Recognition Cards** into weight classes, shuffling the appropriate section of cards, then drawing out four cards, which will represent the 'Mechs of that lance.

Many of the mission briefings list a specific archetype, but the gamemaster should feel free to adjust the strength or size of the archetype force to better fit his players' unit.

INITIAL DAMAGE

Opposing units may not always be in perfect condition when they attack, perhaps as a result of previous contracts or just day-to-day wear and tear. To reflect a more realistic unit condition, use the Random Damage Table. The gamemaster rolls 3D6 for each vehicle or 'Mech in the unit and applies the results given in the table to the 'Mech or vehicle.

The gamemaster may also use the table to simply choose damage and apply it to attacking units, or create his own system for damage.

To determine the location of damage that must be transferred to an internal structure, use the standard **BattleTech** rules for critical hits. (See **BattleTech Compendium**, p. 28.)

RAIDING PARTIES

Raiding parties can be House troops making a lightning attack on another House, merc troops conducting a retaliatory operation for an employer, pirates searching for vital or saleable components, or any other type of operation that can be accomplished using a specific size party.

RANDOM DAMAGE TABLE

3D6 Die Roll	Result
3	All ammunition expended.
4	Roll 1D6. Apply the result in points of damage to all right-side locations.
5	20 points of damage (5-point groups). To determine hit location, roll 2D6 and consult the Front/Back column of the Hit Location Table, p. 27 in the BattleTech Compendium .
6	Ammo in one weapon is halved.
7	One heat sink damaged.
8	25 points of damage (see Result 5).
9	One weapon is unusable.
10	One weapon generates 2 extra Heat Points.
11	Leg actuator damaged (roll again for vehicles).
12	Two heat sinks damaged.
13	Engine takes one hit.
14	10 points of damage to one location (not head).
15	5 points of damage to all left-side locations.
16	2 points of damage to all locations.
17	No damage.
18	Roll again.



LIGHT RAIDING PARTY

The Light Raiding Party is the most common opposition force. Whether a mercenary strike team or a pirate band, the light raiding party is small enough to get in and get the job done quickly. The biggest problem this raiding party may face is being cut off from their DropShips by a larger force.

Light Raiding Party

One company of BattleMechs (3 lances). Roll 2D6 for each lance.

Lance Type

2D6 Roll Lance Type

2-7	Light
8-10	Medium
11-12	Heavy

Armor Forces

2D6 Roll Armor Support

2-6	None
7-10	2 lances light armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled).
11-12	1 company light armor, 1 company medium armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, wheeled, tracked).

Aerospace

2D6 Roll Aerospace Support

2-9	None
10-11	1 lance light aerospace or conventional fighters
12	2 lances light and medium aerospace

Infantry

2D6 Roll Infantry Support

2-6	1 company (3 platoons)
7-10	2 companies
11	3 companies
12	4 companies

Infantry Type

2D6 Roll Infantry Type

2-6	Foot
7-10	Mechanized
11-12	Jump

Infantry Weapons (Roll for each company)

2D6 Roll Infantry Weapons

2-5	Rifle
6-8	SMG
9-10	Flamer
11	Laser
12	SRM

Tech Level

2D6 Roll Tech Level

2-8	3025
9-11	3050
12	3055

Unit Quality

2D6 Roll Unit Quality

2-8	Regular
9-10	Veteran
11-12	Elite

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

2D6 Roll 'Mech/Vehicle Quality

2-9	Good: No random damage.
10-11	Fair: Roll once for each 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.
12	Low: Roll twice for each 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.



MEDIUM RAIDING PARTY

The Medium Raiding Party represents an excellent compromise between speed and strength. The attacking force is small enough to sneak in and accomplish the task but has enough muscle to take on most anything that gets in its way. Some medium raiding parties feel disadvantaged by the lack of a sufficient number of fast, light 'Mechs to perform reconnaissance duties.

Medium Raiding Party

Two companies of BattleMechs (6 lances). Roll 2D6 for each lance.

Lance Type

2D6 Roll

2-6
7-10
11-12

Lance Type

Light
Medium
Heavy

Armor Forces

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-9
10-11
12

Armor Support

None
2 light lances: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled).
1 company light armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled).
1 company medium armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled).

Aerospace

2D6 Roll

2-8
9-11
12

Aerospace Support

None
1 lance light aerospace fighters
1 lance heavy aerospace fighters

Infantry

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-9
10-11
12

Infantry Support

1 company
2 companies
3 companies
4 companies

Infantry Type

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-9
10-12

Infantry Type

Foot
Mechanized
Jump

Infantry Weapons (Roll for each company)

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-8
9-10
11
12

Infantry Weapons

Rifle
SMG
Flamer
Laser
SRM

Tech Level

2D6 Roll

2-8
9-11
12

Tech Level

3025
3050
3055

Unit Quality

2D6 Roll

2-8
9-10
11-12

Unit Quality

Regular
Veteran
Elite

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

2D6 Roll

2-9
10-11
12

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

Good: No random damage.
Fair: Roll once per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.
Poor: Roll twice per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.



HEAVY RAIDING PARTY

This raiding party is the heavy hitter—when a party this size attacks, it means business. Though much slower than their smaller cousins, the Heavy Raiding Party has more than enough firepower to compensate for their lack of speed. An attacking force must possess serious firepower of its own to safely tangle with a Heavy Raiding Party.

Heavy Raiding Party

One battalion of BattleMechs (9 lances)

Lance Type

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-9
10-11
12

Lance Type

Light Lance
Medium Lance
Heavy Lance
Assault Lance

Armor Forces

2D6 Roll

2-4
5-8

Armor Support

None
1 company light armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled)
4 lances light armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled)
1 company light armor, 1 company medium armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled)
1 company medium armor, 2 lances heavy armor: gamemaster chooses type (hover, tracked, wheeled)

Aerospace

2D6 Roll

2-8
9-10
11
12

Aerospace Support

None
1 lance medium aerospace fighters
2 lances medium aerospace fighters
1 lance medium, 1 lance heavy aerospace fighters

Infantry

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-8
9-10
11
12

Infantry Support

1 company
2 companies
3 companies
4 companies
5 companies

Infantry Type

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-9
10-12

Infantry Type

Foot
Mechanized
Jump

Infantry Weapons (Roll for each company)

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-8
9-10
11
12

Infantry Weapons

Rifle
SMG
Flamer
Laser
SRM

Tech Level

2D6 Roll

2-8
9-11
12

Tech Level

3025
3050
3055

Unit Quality

2D6 Roll

2-8
9-11
12

Unit Quality

Regular
Veteran
Elite

Mech/Vehicle Quality

2D6 Roll

2-9
10-11

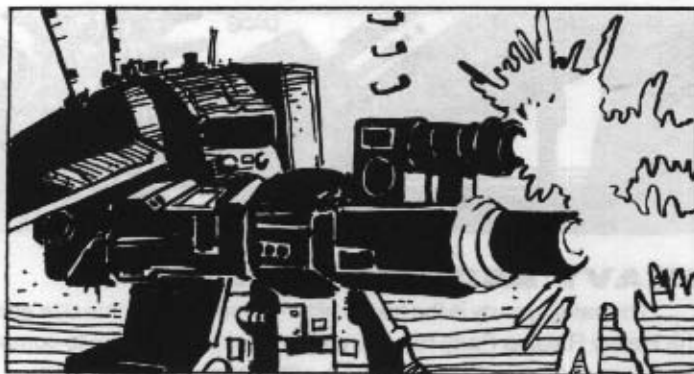
Mech/Vehicle Quality

Good: No random damage.
Fair: Roll once per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.
Low: Roll twice per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.

PLANETARY GARRISONS

Many planets far from the borders of other realms or neighboring states maintain garrisons of some sort. While these forces are relatively small, they are still too big for an attacking force to ignore. These planetary garrisons are made up of local men and women whose skills are adequate at best. They are determined fighters, however, and know the local terrain like the backs of their hands.

After choosing a garrison archetype, the gamemaster should roll 2D6 where necessary to determine the strength of the garrison. The gamemaster may assign individual vehicles as he sees fit or assign them randomly using the Lance Tables beginning on p. xx.



SMALL PLANETARY GARRISON

Small Planetary Garrisons usually protect deep interior worlds where the presence of troops is necessary only to make the population feel safe. Garrisons of this size also protect many Periphery worlds. Though it is small, the garrison works together like a well-oiled machine. The gamemaster may award this unit +1 to its Initiative Roll when engaging in combat.

Small Planetary Garrison

One company of BattleMechs (2 light lances, 1 medium lance).

Armor Forces

2D6 Roll

2-6	Armor Support
7-9	1 company light armor
10	2 companies light armor
11	1 company light armor, 1 company medium armor
12	1 company medium armor, 1 company heavy armor
	2 companies heavy armor

Aerospace

2D6 Roll

2-7	Aerospace Support
8-10	2 lances light conventional fighters
11	2 lances medium conventional fighters
12	2 lances heavy conventional fighters, a single heavy aerospace fighter

Infantry

2D6 Roll

2-6	Infantry Support
7-9	1 battalion (3 companies)
10-11	2 battalions
12	1 regiment
	2 regiments

Infantry Type

2D6 Roll

2-8	Infantry Type
9-11	Foot
12	Mechanized
	Jump

Infantry Weapons (Roll for each battalion)

2D6 Roll

2-5	Infantry Weapons
6-9	Rifle
10	SMG
11	Flamer
12	Laser
	SRM

Tech Level

2D6 Roll

2-11	Tech Level
12	3025
	3050

Unit Quality

2D6 Roll

2-8	Unit Quality
9-11	Green
12	Regular
	Veteran

'Mech/vehicle Quality

2D6 Roll

2-9	'Mech/Vehicle Quality
10-11	Good: No random damage.
12	Fair: Roll once per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.
	Low: Roll twice per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.



MEDIUM PLANETARY GARRISON

The Medium Planetary Garrison force usually protects worlds near the border of a neighboring Successor State. While not as strong as the large garrison, the medium garrison can hold its own against an attacker long enough for reinforcements to arrive. Because it also works well together, the gamemaster may award this unit +1 to its Initiative Roll when engaging in combat.

Medium Planetary Garrison

Two companies of BattleMechs (6 lances).

Company Type

2d6 roll

2-6
7-9
9-10
11-12

Company Type

1 Light, 1 Medium
1 Light, 1 Heavy
2 Medium
1 Medium, 1 Heavy

Armor Forces

2D6 Roll

2-4
5-7
8-9

10
11

12

Armor Support

2 companies light armor
2 companies medium armor
2 companies medium, 1 company light armor

2 companies heavy armor
2 companies heavy armor, 1 company light armor
2 companies heavy armor, 1 company medium armor

Aerospace

2D6 Roll

2-6
7-9
10-11
12

Aerospace Support

1 lance medium conventional fighters
2 lances medium conventional fighters
3 lances medium conventional fighters
2 lances medium conventional fighters, 1 lance light aerospace fighters

Infantry

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-8
9-10
11
12

Infantry Support

1 battalion
2 battalions
1 regiment
2 regiments
3 regiments

Infantry Type

2D6 Roll

2-7
8-10
11-12

Infantry Type

Foot
Mechanized
Jump

Infantry Weapons (Roll for each battalion)

2D6 Roll

2-5
6-8
9-10
11
12

Infantry Weapons

Rifle
SMG
Flamer
Laser
SRM

Tech Level

2D6 Roll

2-11
12

Tech Level

3025
3050

Unit Quality

2D6 Roll

2-7
8-10
11
12

Unit Quality

Green
Regular
Veteran
Elite

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

2D6 Roll

2-9
10-11

12

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

Good: No random damage.
Fair: Roll once per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.
Low: Roll twice per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.



LARGE PLANETARY GARRISON

The Large Planetary Garrison force protects worlds 2 or less jumps from a realm's border, and sometimes planets lying on the border itself. This force is usually tough enough to repulse an invasion unless the attacking force far outnumbers it. Large planetary garrisons also protect highly populated interior worlds. This force consists mostly of local people, and is commanded by veterans-retired or honorably discharged from the regular military. The large planetary garrison rarely fights as a cohesive unit; it must be broken up into smaller units in order to protect the larger cities of a planet.

Large Planetary Garrison

One battalion of BattleMechs (9 lances).

Company Type

2D6 Roll

2-6

11

12

Armor Forces

2D6 Roll

2-5

6-8

9-10

11

12

Aerospace

2D6 Roll

2-7

8-10

11

12

Infantry

2D6 Roll

2-6

7-9

10

11

12

Company Type

3 Companies each of Light, Medium, and Heavy

3 Light, 3 Medium, 2 Heavy, 1 Assault

3 Light, 2 Medium, 2 Heavy, 2 Assault

Armor Support

2 companies light armor, 1 company medium armor

2 companies medium armor, 1 company heavy armor

2 companies medium armor, 2 companies heavy armor

2 companies medium armor, 3 companies heavy armor

3 companies medium armor, 3 companies heavy armor

Aerospace Support

3 lances medium conventional fighters

3 lances medium conventional fighters, 1 lance light aerospace fighters

3 lances medium conventional fighters, 2 lances light aerospace fighters

4 lances medium conventional fighters, 1 lance medium aerospace fighters

Infantry Support

2 battalions

1 regiment

2 regiments

3 regiments

4 regiments

Infantry Type

2D6 Roll

2-6

7-9

10-12

Infantry Type

Foot

Mechanized

Jump

Infantry Weapons (Roll for each battalion)

2D6 Roll

2-5

6-8

9-10

11

12

Infantry Weapons

Rifle

SMG

Flamer

Laser

SRM

Tech Level

2D6 Roll

2-10

11-12

Tech Level

3025

3050

Unit Quality

2D6 Roll

2-7

8-10

11

12

Unit Quality

Green

Regular

Veteran

Elite

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

2D6 Roll

2-9

10-11

12

'Mech/Vehicle Quality

Good: No random damage.

Fair: Roll once per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.

Low: Roll twice per 'Mech/vehicle on the Random Damage Table.

LANCE GENERATION TABLES

The following tables provide the weight categories, technology levels, and Successor State for each 'Mech in current use. Please note that BattleMech and vehicle technology for 3025 and 3050 is the same. The gamemaster should use the tech level appropriate to the location and origin of opposing troops. To determine the quality of the attacking forces' equipment, use the Random Damage Table, p. 14.

To determine the appropriate tech level for units originating in the Periphery realms and for pirate bands, use the table column for the Inner Sphere realm closest to the Periphery world in question according to the Periphery Proximity Table below.

The vehicle tables provide various lance configurations. Each table gives the number of dice to roll for that table. The gamemaster may roll on the optional VTOL Vehicles Table rather than the tracked, wheeled, or hover table for any lance.

PERIPHERY PROXIMITY TABLE

Periphery Realm	Nearest Inner Sphere House
Taurian Concordat	Federated Commonwealth/Davion
Magistracy of Canopus	Capellan Confederation or Free Worlds League
Outworlds Alliance	Draconis Combine or Federated Commonwealth/Davion
Circinus Federation	Free Worlds League
Rim Collection	Federated Commonwealth/Steiner



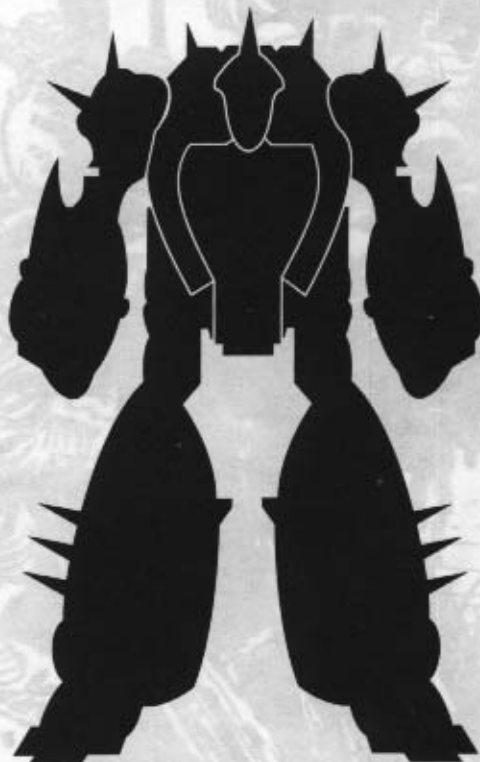
FORCE ARCHETYPES

LIGHT 'MECHS (3025, 3050)

1D6 Roll	F-C Davion	F-C Steiner	Kurita	Marik	Liao	FRR	St. Ives
1	Ostscout	Hornet	Locust	UrbanMech	Javelin	Panther	Valkyrie
	Locust	Commando	Locust	UrbanMech	Jenner	Commando	Raven
	Valkyrie	Commando	Panther	Hermes (I or II)	Raven	Jenner	Wasp
	Stinger	Wasp	Wasp	Stinger	Wasp	Wasp	Stinger
2	Stinger	Wolfhound	Panther	Spider	Raven	Locust	Ostscout
	Stinger	Firestarter	Wasp	Spider	Locust	Spider	Raven
	Valkyrie	Wasp	Jenner	Hermes	Wasp	Wasp	Spider
	Valkyrie	Spider	Javelin	Locust	Wasp	Stinger	Locust
3	Hornet	Wolfhound	Locust	Javelin	Stinger	Panther	Wasp
	Ostscout	Commando	Spider	Stinger	Stinger	Panther	Valkyrie
	Valkyrie	Commando	Wasp	Stinger	Wasp	Commando	Valkyrie
	Wasp	Stinger	Stinger	Stinger	Wasp	Commando	Jenner
4	UrbanMech	Firestarter	UrbanMech	Javelin	Raven	Spider	Locust
	Valkyrie	Locust	UrbanMech	Phoenix Hawk	Jenner	Javelin	Spider
	Hatchetman	Commando	Panther	Phoenix Hawk	Vindicator	Assassin	Wasp
	Falcon	Phoenix Hawk	Panther	Wasp	Blackjack	Assassin	Firestarter
5	Valkyrie	Wolfhound	Jenner	Vulcan	Raven	Commando	Raven
	Valkyrie	Assassin	Jenner	Cicada	Javelin	Hatchetman	Valkyrie
	Valkyrie	Phoenix Hawk	Sentinel	Locust	Javelin	Javelin	Valkyrie
	Valkyrie	Trebuchet	Wasp	Spider	Whitworth	UrbanMech	Valkyrie
6	Spider	Locust	Javelin	Locust	Raven	Scorpion	UrbanMech
	Ostscout	Locust	Javelin	Javelin	Wasp	Panther	UrbanMech
	Assassin	Assassin	Whitworth	Javelin	Wasp	Panther	Javelin
	Spider	Spider	Jenner	Javelin	Stinger	Wasp	Jenner

LIGHT 'MECHS (3055)

1D6 Roll	F-C	Kurita	Marik	Liao
1	Valkyrie	Hitman	Hammer	Jackal
	BattleHawk	Panther	Stinger	Wasp
	Hollander	Wasp	Stinger	Raven
	Commando	Stinger	Hammer	Jenner
2	Scarabus	Venom	Hermes	Jackal
	Wolfhound	Spider	Tarantula	UrbanMech
	Valkyrie	Jenner	Wasp	Stinger
	BattleHawk	Jenner	Locust	Javelin
3	Hollander	Hitman	Jackal	Jackal
	Hollander	Hitman	Locust	Jackal
	Commando	Jenner	Stinger	Jenner
	Wolfhound	Jenner	Hermes	Jenner
4	Fireball	Locust	Tarantula	Jackal
	Fireball	Locust	Jackal	Raven
	Stealth	Panther	Jackal	Whitworth
	Ostscout	UrbanMech	Stinger	Wasp
5	Dart	Panther	Jackal	UrbanMech
	Fireball	Panther	Hermes	UrbanMech
	Commando	Panther	Wasp	Jackal
	Stealth	Hitman	Hammer	Jenner
6	BattleHawk	Venom	Hammer	Jenner
	Scarabus	Venom	Locust	Jenner
	Hollander	Spider	Anvil	Javelin
	Valkyrie	Spider	Stinger	Jackal



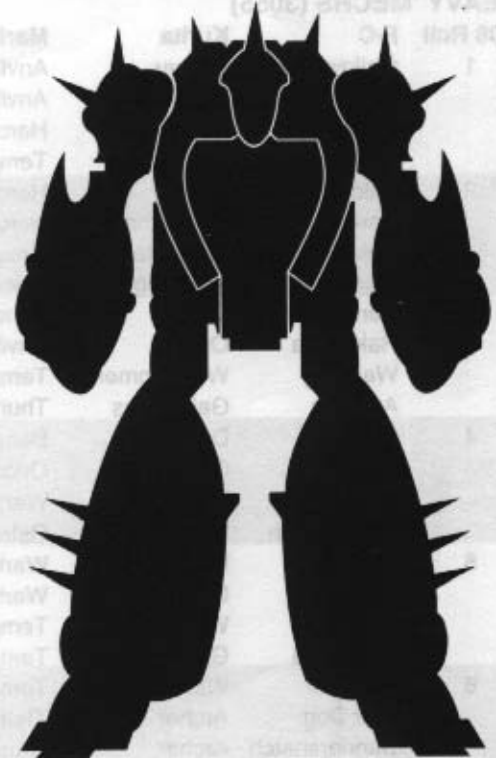
FORCE ARCHETYPES

MEDIUM 'MECH (3025, 3050)

1D6 Roll	F-C Davion	F-C Steiner	Kurita	Marik	Liao	FRR	St. Ives
1	Wolverine	Assassin	Whitworth	Griffin	Phoenix Hawk	Shadow Hawk	Blackjack
	Phoenix Hawk	Trebuchet	Whitworth	Hunchback	Vindicator	Trebuchet	Enforcer
	Enforcer	Shadow Hawk	Sentinel	Hermes II	Clint	Griffin	Vindicator
	Centurion	Shadow Hawk	Wolf Trap	Phoenix Hawk	Blackjack	Wolverine	Phoenix Hawk
2	Whitworth	Shadow Hawk	Crab	Whitworth	Vindicator	Hunchback	Dervish
	Dervish	Wolverine	Trebuchet	Whitworth	Vindicator	Assassin	Hatchetman
	Enforcer	Hatchetman	Hunchback	Hermes II	Clint	Hatchetman	Scorpion
	Enforcer	Centurion	Scorpion	Phoenix Hawk	Dervish	Whitworth	Griffin
3	Phoenix Hawk	Wolverine	Hunchback	Vulcan	Vindicator	Assassin	Vindicator
	Enforcer	Hatchetman	Wolf Trap	Cicada	Blackjack	Assassin	Trebuchet
	Griffin	Griffin	Kintaro	Phoenix Hawk	Phoenix Hawk	Scorpion	Hatchetman
	Hatchetman	Shadow Hawk	Trebuchet	Whitworth	Trebuchet	Spider	Enforcer
4	Phoenix Hawk	Trebuchet	Hunchback	Griffin	Clint	Hunchback	Dervish
	Phoenix Hawk	Trebuchet	Hunchback	Hunchback	Clint	Griffin	Trebuchet
	Assassin	Whitworth	Crab	Dervish	Vindicator	Griffin	Whitworth
	Assassin	Shadow Hawk	Griffin	Vulcan	Vindicator	Shadow Hawk	Griffin
5	Griffin	Hatchetman	Wolverine	Hermes II	Blackjack	Hatchetman	Trebuchet
	Axeman	Grasshopper	Griffin	Whitworth	Archer	Hunchback	Archer
	Centurion	Catapult	Sentinel	Thunderbolt	Vindicator	Wolverine	Assassin
	Enforcer	Shadow Hawk	Wolf Trap	Griffin	Phoenix Hawk	Wolverine	Raven
6	Enforcer	Crusader	Crab	Phoenix Hawk	Grasshopper	Wolverine	Clint
	Enforcer	Hatchetman	Kintaro	Phoenix Hawk	Vindicator	Shadow Hawk	Vindicator
	Enforcer	Wolverine	Sentinel	Whitworth	Vindicator	Centurion	Griffin
	Centurion	Centurion	Wolf Trap	Hermes II	Phoenix Hawk	Phoenix Hawk	Griffin

MEDIUM 'MECHS (3055)

1D6 Roll	F-C	Kurita	Marik	Liao
1	Stealth	Komodo	Apollo	Snake
	Phoenix Hawk	Komodo	Whitworth	Huron Warrior
	Assassin	Crab	Griffin	Trebuchet
	Cicada	Whitworth	Phoenix Hawk	Vindicator
2	Wolverine	Hunchback	Wraith	Vindicator
	Dervish	Wolf Trap	Hermes II	Snake
	Enforcer	Trebuchet	Wraith	Snake
	Centurion	Daimyo	Cicada	Blackjack
3	Hatchetman	Daimyo	Hunchback	Scorpion
	Nightsky	Daimyo	Apollo	Vindicator
	Shadow Hawk	Trebuchet	Apollo	Huron Warrior
	Centurion	Sentinel	Phoenix Hawk	Phoenix Hawk
4	Dervish	Crab	Hermes II	Vindicator
	Watchman	Kintaro	Whitworth	Vindicator
	Shadow Hawk	Grim Reaper	Wraith	Trebuchet
	Phoenix Hawk	Grim Reaper	Vulcan	Snake
5	Stealth	Wolverine	Phoenix Hawk	Phoenix Hawk
	Stealth	Griffin	Wraith	Clint
	Assassin	Trebuchet	Hunchback	Whitworth
	Assassin	Wolf Trap	Whitworth	Blackjack
6	Nightsky	Wolf Trap	Catapult	Snake
	Nightsky	Grasshopper	Apollo	Snake
	Trebuchet	Wolverine	Apollo	Vindicator
	Dervish	Komodo	Whitworth	Vindicator



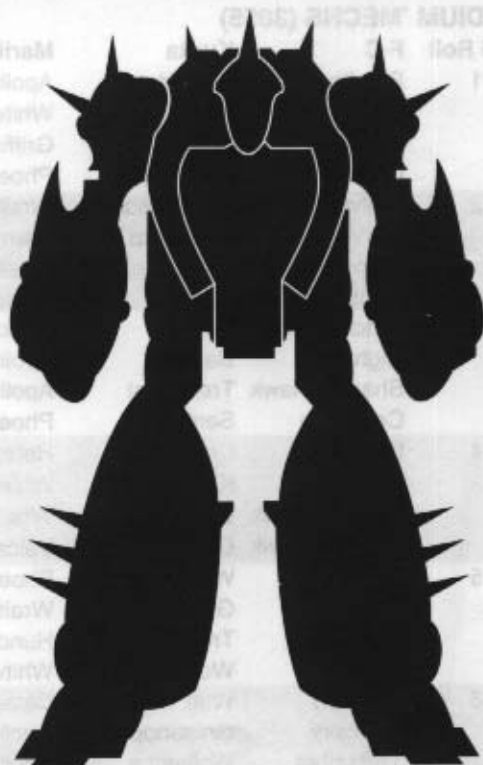
FORCE ARCHETYPES

HEAVY 'MECHS (3025, 3050)

1D6 Roll	F-C Davion	F-C Steiner	Kurita	Marik	Liao	FRR	St. Ives
1	Caesar	Catapult	Crusader	Orion	Cataphract	Grasshopper	Ostol
	Rifleman	Warhammer	Dragon	Ostroc	Catapult	Thunderbolt	Rifleman
	Crusader	Thunderbolt	Warhammer	Archer	Crusader	Crusader	Ostroc
	Warhammer	Marauder	Rifleman	Thunderbolt	Warhammer	Quickdraw	Archer
2	Axeman	Warhammer	Catapult	Orion	JagerMech	Rifleman	Grasshopper
	Ostroc	Warhammer	Thunderbolt	Quickdraw	Warhammer	Dragon	Archer
	Ostol	Marauder	Dragon	Ostroc	Warhammer	JagerMech	Crusader
	Marauder	Marauder	JagerMech	Marauder	Archer	Marauder	Rifleman
3	Warhammer	Catapult	Rifleman	Archer	Catapult	Archer	Crusader
	Cataphract	Axeman	Rifleman	Rifleman	Archer	Ostroc	Catapult
	JagerMech	Marauder	Warhammer	Ostroc	Archer	Warhammer	Rifleman
	Rifleman	Grasshopper	Dragon	Thunderbolt	Grasshopper	Grasshopper	Marauder
4	Crusader	Warhammer	Dragon	Orion	Warhammer	Dragon	Cataphract
	Crusader	Warhammer	Dragon	Rifleman	Cataphract	Warhammer	Axeman
	Axeman	Archer	Crusader	Archer	Quickdraw	Crusader	Thunderbolt
	Axeman	Archer	Grasshopper	Warhammer	Trebuchet	Marauder	Rifleman
5	Victor	Zeus	Catapult	Awesome	Cataphract	JagerMech	Axeman
	Ostroc	Rifleman	Archer	Quickdraw	Catapult	Rifleman	Warhammer
	Caesar	Warhammer	Rifleman	Orion	Catapult	Archer	Marauder
	Crusader	Thunderbolt	Thunderbolt	Marauder	Warhammer	Archer	Crusader
6	Banshee	Atlas	BattleMaster	Archer	Warhammer	Crusader	Quickdraw
	Warhammer	Catapult	Dragon	Thunderbolt	Warhammer	Thunderbolt	Thunderbolt
	Marauder	Archer	Thunderbolt	Thunderbolt	Warhammer	Quickdraw	Cyclops
	Ostroc	Axeman	Catapult	Crusader	Warhammer	Charger	Archer

HEAVY 'MECHS (3055)

1D6 Roll	F-C	Kurita	Marik	Liao
1	Gallowglas	Daikyu	Anvil	Thunder
	Bandersnatch	Dragon	Anvil	Rifleman
	Caesar	Thunderbolt	Hercules	Crusader
	Warhammer	War Dog	Tempest	Cataphract
2	Falconer	Daikyu	Hercules	Quickdraw
	Penetrator	Warhammer	Hercules	Marauder
	Catapult	Marauder	Grasshopper	Crusader
	Marauder	War Dog	Orion	War Dog
3	Penetrator	Dragon	Bandersnatch	Thunder
	Rakshasa	Ostroc	Anvil	Archer
	War Dog	Warhammer	Tempest	War Dog
	Axeman	Gallowglas	Thunderbolt	Warhammer
4	Axeman	Dragon	Bandersnatch	Ostol
	Axeman	Quickdraw	Orion	Catapult
	NightSky	Marauder	War Dog	Cataphract
	Hatchetman	Grasshopper	Ostroc	Grasshopper
5	Penetrator	Daikyu	Warhammer	Thunder
	Penetrator	Daikyu	Warhammer	Cataphract
	Rakshasa	War Dog	Tempest	Ostol
	Rakshasa	Gallowglas	Tempest	Rifleman
6	Falconer	War Dog	Tempest	Cataphract
	War Dog	Archer	Thunderbolt	Warhammer
	Bandersnatch	Archer	Crusader	Warhammer
	Caesar	Warhammer	Marauder	Marauder



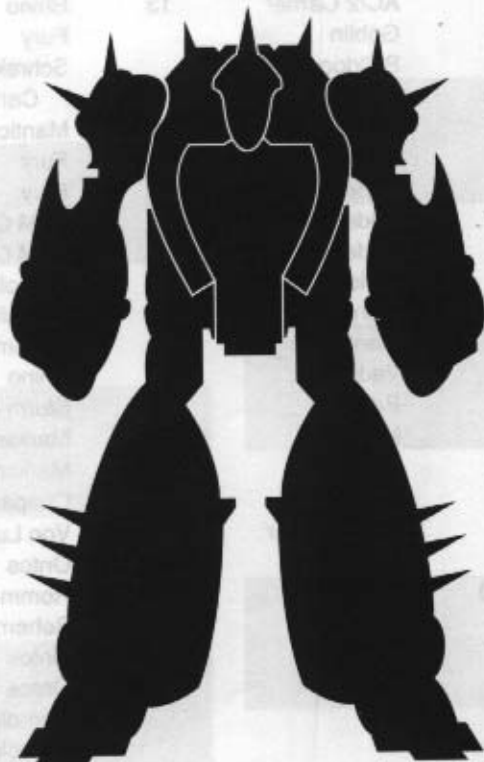
FORCE ARCHETYPES

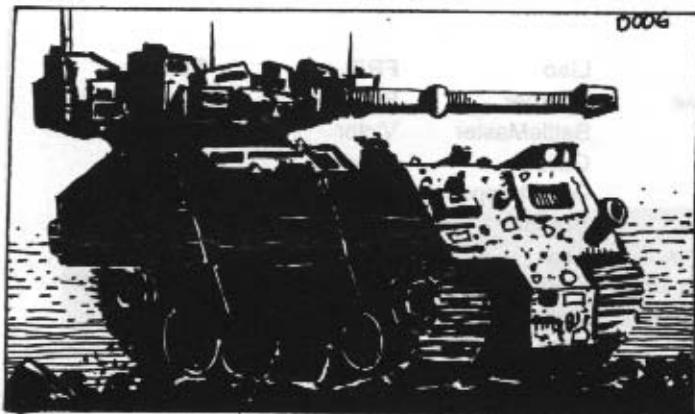
ASSAULT 'MECHS (3025, 3050)

1D6 Roll	F-C Davion	F-C Steiner	Kurita	Marik	Liao	FRR	St. Ives
1	Victor	Zeus	Hatamoto-Chi	Awesome	Charger	Banshee	BattleMaster
	Warhammer	Victor	Stalker	Orion	BattleMaster	Victor	Goliath
	Awesome	Archer	BattleMaster	Stalker	Goliath	Charger	Victor
	BattleMaster	Atlas	Katana	Archer	Grasshopper	Awesome	Banshee
2	Banshee	Zeus	Charger	Goliath	Stalker	BattleMaster	Warhammer
	Awesome	Banshee	Mauler	Awesome	Atlas	Zeus	Marauder
	Stalker	Banshee	Atlas	Warhammer	BattleMaster	Charger	Marauder II
	Zeus	Victor	Stalker	BattleMaster	Cyclops	Stalker	Archer
3	Atlas	Zeus	Stalker	Stalker	Atlas	Zeus	Victor
	Marauder II	Atlas	Atlas	Awesome	Cataphract	Archer	Awesome
	Cyclops	Awesome	Katana	Awesome	Stalker	Banshee	Atlas
	Victor	Banshee	Hatamoto-Chi	Catapult	Awesome	Dragon	Marauder
4	Marauder II	Banshee	Charger	Awesome	Stalker	BattleMaster	Goliath
	Victor	Atlas	Charger	Goliath	BattleMaster	BattleMaster	Stalker
	Victor	Victor	Warhammer	BattleMaster	Awesome	Stalker	Charger
	Archer	Victor	BattleMaster	Stalker	Charger	Zeus	Charger
5	Marauder II	Banshee	Katana	Archer	Stalker	Atlas	Marauder II
	Marauder II	Banshee	Mauler	Archer	Stalker	Victor	Atlas
	Awesome	Banshee	Atlas	Awesome	BattleMaster	Zeus	Banshee
	Victor	Banshee	Archer	BattleMaster	Goliath	Awesome	Awesome
6	Axeman	Atlas	Hatamoto-Chi	Cyclops	Charger	BattleMaster	Banshee
	Atlas	Atlas	Stalker	Awesome	Charger	Awesome	Atlas
	Marauder II	Atlas	BattleMaster	BattleMaster	Charger	Awesome	Atlas
	Awesome	Atlas	Mauler	Stalker	Atlas	Banshee	Marauder

ASSAULT 'MECHS (3055)

1D6 Roll	F-C	Kurita	Marik	Liao
1	Salamander	Gunslinger	Albatross	BattleMaster
	Salamander	Naginata	Cerberus	Warhammer
	Archer	Hatamoto-Chi	Awesome	Stalker
	Awesome	Stalker	BattleMaster	Goliath
2	Atlas	Charger	Grand Titan	Atlas
	Zeus	BattleMaster	Stalker	Marauder
	Victor	Mauler	Stalker	BattleMaster
	Gunslinger	Katana	Awesome	Archer
3	Victor	Naginata	Albatross	Thunder
	Banshee	Gunslinger	Awesome	Charger
	Salamander	Charger	Stalker	BattleMaster
	Awesome	Mauler	Grasshopper	Stalker
4	Marauder II	Hatamoto-Chi	Grand Titan	Cyclops
	Zeus	Charger	Cerebus	Goliath
	Atlas	Gunslinger	Cerebus	BattleMaster
	Banshee	BattleMaster	Stalker	BattleMaster
5	Berserker	Mauler	Awesome	Stalker
	Berserker	Katana	Awesome	Stalker
	Axeman	Gunslinger	Grand Titan	Charger
	NightSky	Atlas	BattleMaster	BattleMaster
6	Marauder II	Stalker	Albatross	Charger
	Marauder II	Atlas	Awesome	Charger
	Berserker	Hatamoto-Chi	Stalker	Charger
	Atlas	Katana	Stalker	BattleMaster





TRACKED VEHICLES (3025, 3050)

3D6 Roll	Vehicle	3D6 Roll	Vehicle
3	Scorpion	11	Hunter
	Vedette		Hunter
	Galleon		Goblin
	Goblin		Bulldog
4	Scorpion	12	Manticore
	Vedette		Manticore
	LRM Carrier		Demolisher
	Partisan		Schrek PPC Carrier
5	Hunter	13	Rhino
	AC/2 Carrier		Fury
	Goblin		Schrek PPC Carrier
	Bulldog		Manticore
6	SRM Carrier	14	Fury
	Bulldog		Fury
	Galleon		LRM Carrier
	Vedette		LRM Carrier
7	Vedette	15	Demolisher
	Vedette		Demolisher
	Bulldog		Behemoth
	Manticore		Rhino
8	Manticore	16	Sturm Feur
	Vedette		Marksman
	Patton		Marksman
	Manticore		Chaparral
9	Scorpion	17	Von Luckner
	Schrek		Ontos
	Von Luckner		Rommel
	Sturm Feur		Behemoth
10	Patton	18	Ontos
	Patton		Ontos
	Puma		Demolisher
	Manticore		Demolisher

WHEELED VEHICLES (3025, 3050)

1D6 Roll	Vehicle
1	Striker
	Striker
	Striker
	Striker
2	Striker
	Galleon
	Hetzer
	SRM Carrier
3	Striker
	Hunter
	Galleon
	Hetzer
4	Demon
	Demon
	SRM Carrier
	Hetzer
5	Thor
	Thor
	Marksman
	Chaparral
6	Demon
	Demolisher
	Ontos
	Behemoth





HOVER VEHICLES (3025, 3050)

3D6 Roll	Result	3D6 Roll	Result
3	Savannah Master Gabriel Beagle J. Edgar	11	Drillson Zephyr Maxim Condor
4	Harasser Harasser J. Edgar Pegasus	12	Condor Condor Condor Condor
5	Saladin Saladin Saracen Scimitar	13	Beagle Beagle Harasser Harasser
6	Saladin Zephyr Lightning Kanga	14	Maxim Maxim Maxim Drillson
7	Maxim Maxim Drillson Condor	15	Saladin Saladin Drillson Zephyr
8	Condor Saladin Drillson Zephyr	16	Saladin Saladin Saladin Saladin
9	Saracen Saracen Condor Condor	17	Drillson Drillson Condor Condor
10	Pegasus Kanga Harasser Saladin	18	Saracen Saracen Saracen Saracen

VTOL VEHICLES (3025, 3050) (OPTIONAL)

2D6 Roll	Result
1	Ferret Ferret Ferret Ripper
2	Ripper Ripper Ripper Nightshade
3	Warrior Warrior Ripper Ripper
4	Nightshade Ferret Warrior Cyrano
5	Warrior Cyrano Nightshade Ripper
6	Warrior Warrior Cyrano Cyrano
7	Cyrano Cyrano Cyrano Cyrano
8	Nightshade Nightshade Nightshade Cyrano

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

Historians have dubbed the 31st century the Century of Change. No other time in the history of mankind has witnessed such dramatic changes in political balance. Even a broad list easily reveals the depth of turmoil that has gripped the Inner Sphere:

- The Fourth Succession War
- The alliance of the Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth
- The birth of the Free Rasalhague Republic
- The War of 3039
- The rediscovery of Star League technology
- The Clan invasion
- The pending alliance between the Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation
- Cooperation between the Federated Commonwealth and Draconis Combine
- The ComStar schism

Forty-four years still remain in this century. What does the future hold, and how have these changes affected the modern mercenary?

The first significant development was the establishment of Outreach as the Mercenary's Star. Ceded to Wolf's Dragoons by a grateful Hanse Davion at the end of the Fourth Succession War, Outreach was established as a clearing-house for mercenaries and their potential employers. In stark contrast to previous mercenary planets, Outreach is clean, safe, and relatively orderly. The capital city of Harlech, nicknamed Wolf City by its inhabitants, serves as the hub of all mercenary activity in the Inner Sphere. Negotiations for public contracts are strictly regulated to prevent and/or punish unethical dealings on either side, but parties to illegal contracts have very little recourse to the machinery of justice.

The ComStar schism produced the second greatest change in mercenary operations. That organization's very public internal disagreement destroyed the credibility of the Mercenary Review Board. The ruling Houses of the Inner Sphere replaced the Board with the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission, basing this new arbitration body on Outreach. The Commission comprises one seat for each House and ComStar, plus an additional seat for a randomly chosen mercenary commander. This body monitors and arbitrates all contract negotiations and disputes, so far with good success. Mercenaries and employers alike may now register their grievances with confidence that they will receive a neutral and fair judgment.

This section provides a synopsis of the current political situation in the Inner Sphere, beginning with an overview and then examining each House separately. The Periphery also merits a brief mention. The gamemaster should use this information to describe the current atmosphere of an employer's realm or a target realm whenever the player characters conduct reconnaissance or intelligence operations before or after accepting a contract. For more details, see the **Intelligence Operations Handbook**.

STATE OF THE INNER SPHERE

Business is booming in Harlech because the Inner Sphere's need for mercenaries has never been greater. The increased activity sparked by the Clan invasion continues to fuel conflicts throughout known space, and other current events make mercenaries very necessary as well. Pirate raids in all corners of the Inner Sphere have risen dramatically. Many worlds bordering on the Clan occupation zone feel ignored by their Inner Sphere governments and are hiring mercs independently to provide security and defense. Many businesses, particularly trading cartels, are hiring mercs to defend against attacks not only from pirates, but from competing businesses as well.

The Clan invasion forced the Houses of the Inner Sphere to work together, however temporarily, to end the threat. Only the working agreement between the Federated Commonwealth and the Draconis Combine remains viable: now that the Clan threat has ended for a number of years, the Houses again seem more concerned with their own petty ambitions. The alliance between the Federated Suns and Lyran Commonwealth appears to be increasingly unstable. Melissa Steiner's death sparked unrest in the Lyran states of the alliance, where anti-Victor sentiment continues to cause ill will between the two factions. The death of Ryan Steiner, popular leader of the Free Skye Movement, does not seem to have diminished the force of that rebellion; the Federated Commonwealth must still deal with the secessionist movement in its midst.

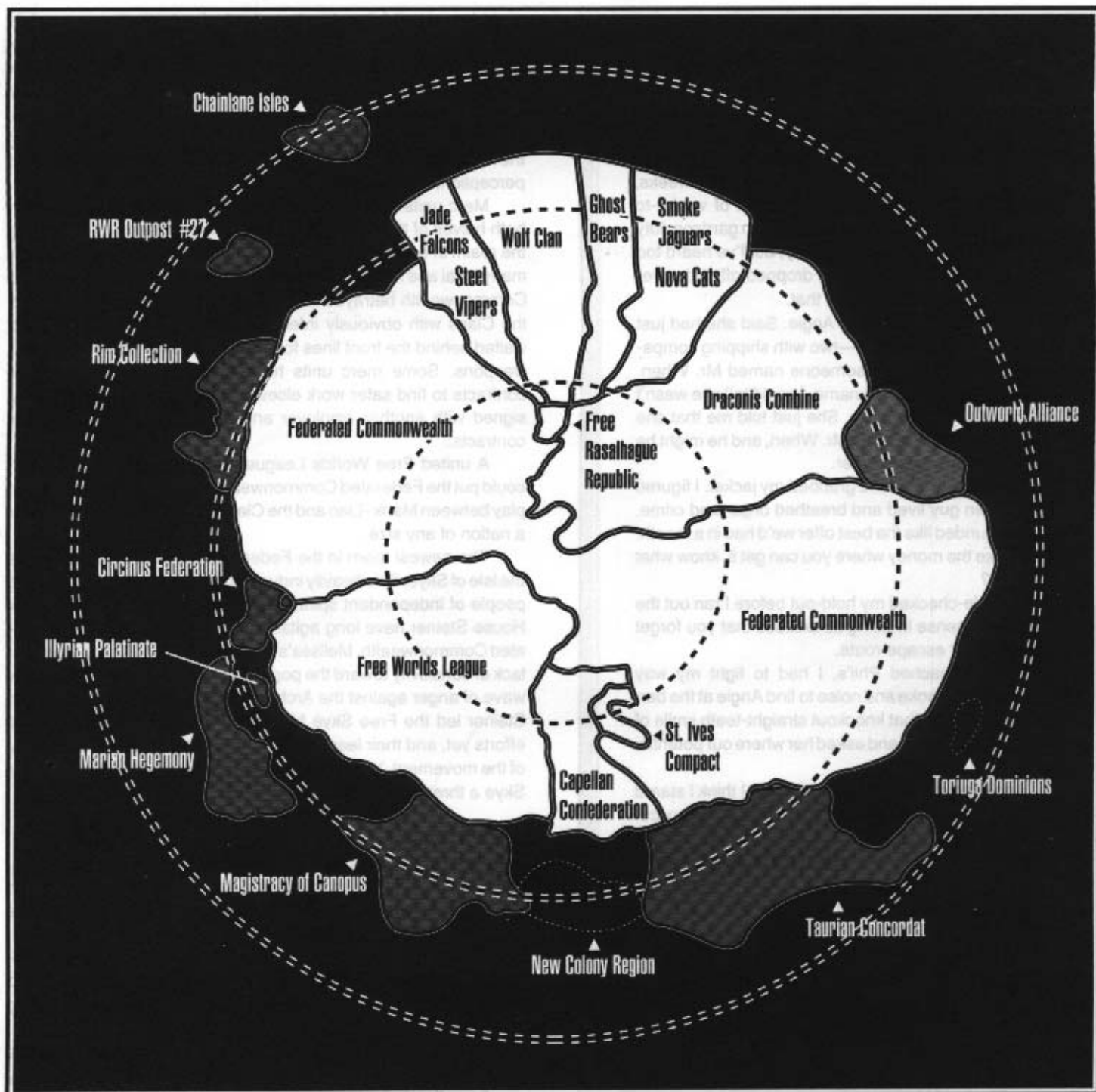
The agreements designed to bind together the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation continue to be forged, though neither realm enjoys popular support for this alliance. The always troublesome Duchy of Andurien is offering very vocal opposition to the plan, and the Zion Province has threatened to secede from the Free Worlds League if the marriage of Sun-Tzu Liao and Isis Marik becomes a reality.

Another unexpected result of the Marik-Liao alliance is the Treaty of Taurus, uniting the resurgent Periphery realms of the Magistracy of Canopus and the Taurian Concordat in a relationship of mutual cooperation. The signing of which was recently witnessed by ComStar, this alliance constitutes one more source of potential trouble on the borders of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation.

The Word of Blake represents yet another complication in the Free Worlds League-Capellan Confederation alliance. Currently hard at work to integrate itself into both the Free Worlds government and SAFE, the Marik intelligence service, how the Word of Blake views the joining of the two realms remains pure speculation.

These current and potential conflicts represent a gold mine of opportunities for the mercenary. Good merc units often have the luxury of choosing from several offers. As the Inner Sphere slips further from the uneasy unity it found against the Clans, the modern mercenary must find a way to benefit and so survive.

CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION



•INNERSPHERE/PERIPHERY MAP•

THE COLOR OF MONEY

So there we were, down to our last kroner. I had just got off the comm with one of the many bill collectors who had been enriching our lives recently. Angie had been scouring the boards for weeks, trying to dig up some work—any sort of work—to save our butts. Sure, we could've taken garrison duty on some rock near the Periphery, but I've heard too many tales of units that were dropped off and never picked up to risk my unit on that.

Then I get the call from Angie. Said she had just lined up three potentials—two with shipping companies and the last with someone named Mr. When. The way Angie said his name, I could tell she wasn't going to say much more. She just told me that she was waiting at Phil's with Mr. When, and he might be offering some killer kroner.

I killed the comm and grabbed my jacket. I figured this When guy lived and breathed organized crime, but it sounded like the best offer we'd had in a month. You take the money where you can get it, know what I mean?

I double-checked my hold-out before I ran out the door—no sense in being so anxious that you forget to plan your escape route.

When I reached Phil's, I had to fight my way through the smoke and noise to find Angie at the bar. She hit me with that knockout straight-teeth smile of hers. I smiled back and asked her where our potential was.

Angie led me to a corner booth and I think I stared when I saw him. Large and definitely of Asian descent, When sat at the table with his hands folded in front of him. He wore rings with obscenely large gems on every finger—we're talking thumbs, too. When he looked at me and smiled, he flashed me four gold teeth. I smiled back and sat down, and for some reason, I wasn't too worried about the bill collectors any more.

—From *Voices of Outreach: Interviews with Mercenaries*. Tikonov Press, June, 3054.

FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH

The alliance of the mighty Federated Commonwealth is straining under the burden of several problems that, if not resolved soon, could spell disaster for the powerful nation. While still recovering from the death of Hanse Davion, the realm suffered the shock of the brutal assassination of Melissa Steiner-Davion. Despite the rea-

sonable and truthful explanations for the haste, the Lyran people's shock turned to anger when Melissa was buried too quickly for her son and heir to the Federated Commonwealth throne, Victor Steiner-Davion, to attend the services. Though Archon Prince Victor explained that he was kept off Tharkad for security reasons, his explanation did little to quell the people's rising anger. Though the Archon Prince has made a concerted effort to change his public perception, few of his Lyran subjects are receptive to his gestures.

Merc units with long and distinguished service records with both halves of the Federated Commonwealth seem to be leaving the realm in droves, leaving the nation short-handed and bereft of many loyal and high-quality troops. Many mercs felt the Federated Commonwealth betrayed them by ordering their units to engage the Clans with obviously inferior equipment, while regular units waited behind the front lines for refits with newer, more advanced weapons. Some merc units have gone rogue, breaking their contracts to find safer work elsewhere. Many units have already signed with another employer and are simply waiting out their contracts.

A united Free Worlds League and Capellan Confederation could put the Federated Commonwealth in the middle of a squeeze play between Marik-Liao and the Clans—an untenable position for a nation of any size.

The newest thorn in the Federated Commonwealth's side is the Isle of Skye. This heavily industrial region is populated by proud people of independent spirit, and these fiercely loyal subjects of House Steiner have long agitated for separation from the Federated Commonwealth. Melissa's assassination and Victor's general lack of sensitivity toward the population of Skye has created a new wave of anger against the Archon Prince. Before his death, Ryan Steiner led the Free Skye Movement in its strongest separatist efforts yet, and their leader's death has not yet sapped the vitality of the movement. Victor Steiner-Davion must continue to consider Skye a threat to his realm's unity.

DRACONIS COMBINE

The Draconis Combine took a severe beating from the Clans, and one of their current priorities is to recover their strength, though they are currently the most stable realm in the Inner Sphere. The Combine has adopted an aggressive attitude toward the Clans. Coordinator Theodore Kurita supports a strategy of massive raiding and harassment of the forces on Clan-held worlds, hoping to keep the Clans off balance and prevent them from further ravaging his realm.

Coordinator Kurita also made a priority of rescinding his father's Death to Mercenaries order. Though this act did not exactly result in a flood of mercs accepting contracts with the realm—past experiences made them understandably cautious—those who have worked for the Combine under Theodore's rule report fair treatment.

The Combine continues to abide by the working agreement established with the Federated Commonwealth during the Clan War. Many attribute this to Archon Prince Victor Steiner-Davion's personal influence with the Kurita family based on his friendship with Theodore's daughter, Omi, and his son, Hohiro.

Hohiro and Victor became friends during their training to face the Clans by Wolf's Dragoons on Outreach and cemented that relationship when Victor rescued the heir to the Combine throne from Clan Nova Cat on Teniente. That rescue mission did nothing to enhance Victor's public image in the Federated Commonwealth, but made him very popular in the Combine. Both realms are making an effort to capitalize on this spirit of cooperation, but the Combine remains a bit skittish of becoming too involved; they view the growing rebellion movement in Skye with some trepidation.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE

The Free Worlds League currently holds the position of greatest strength in the Inner Sphere. The Clan War pushed the League to the top of the weapons-production heap; they now produce the most technologically advanced weapons in the Inner Sphere, and supplied those weapons to the realms fighting the Clans. This so strengthened the League's economy that it now threatens to overtake the Federated Commonwealth as the economic superpower of the Inner Sphere. This realm is not without its share of problems, however.

The Free Worlds League has always had a problem with factionalism. While Captain-General Thomas Marik has consistently and wisely worked to consolidate the power of the realm into an efficient system of government and unite the disparate states of his realm, recent events have overshadowed his efforts. Ask one hundred Free Worlds citizens how they feel about the Word of Blake and the pending alliance of the Free Worlds League and the Capellan Confederation, and they will give two hundred different answers. Some citizens and leaders support the alliance, recognizing its potential to create a realm that could counterbalance the mighty Federated Commonwealth. Others resist the alliance, afraid to trust their future to what many regard as the most unbalanced family ever to hold power in the Inner Sphere. Much of this opposition comes from the areas bordering the Capellan confederation, but citizens of the interior regions also express these doubts.

The addition of the Word of Blake faction, who requested and received asylum in the Free Worlds League following their dra-

matic break from ComStar, creates an even more volatile mix. When the events following the battle of Tukayyid broke ComStar apart, those who clung to the traditional way fled to the Free Worlds League. The flood of refugees has only now begun to slow to a trickle. Though Thomas Marik has attempted to maintain a political distance from the group, Word of Blake's desire for his ascent to the

Primacy and the fanatically loyal forces the group brings to the League military makes the faction hard to ignore. Not surprisingly, many League citizens and leaders fear the influence Word of Blake may wield over Marik and League policies. Andrea Balter, Member of Parliament from Shiloh, has been quoted as commenting that "the Free Worlds League has always been home to those whose ideas fall outside the mainstream, but we do not need the lunatic fringe coming in here and trying to run the show." So far, Thomas Marik has tolerated all opposition to his recent decisions.

Captain-General Marik appears to be making an effort to control his realm without outside help. In addition to the Word of Blake troops, most of whom have sworn loyalty to Marik, Thomas has also recently formed the Knights of the Inner Sphere. This group of elite MechWarriors from throughout the League serve as Thomas' personal army, loyal only to him. Thomas is relying heavily on this new force to seal the cracks created by opposing factions and keep the League united. Though some political advisors urge Thomas to strike at the weakened Federated Commonwealth while that realm is distracted by its own problems, Marik so far refuses to engage in a massive military effort, perhaps because his son Joshua is still undergoing treatment for leukemia at the NAIS.



CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

The Capellan Confederation has risen from the remnants of the realm left after the ravages of the Fourth Succession War. Though Sun-Tzu Liao claims the glory for this renaissance, his mother Romano deserves most of the credit for rebuilding the Confederation following its defeat at the hands of the newly formed Federated Commonwealth. Sun-Tzu, who may take justifiable pride in his successful efforts to motivate his realm and give it

direction, has promised his subjects that the Confederation will rise again to become the dominant power in the Inner Sphere. His alliance with the Free Worlds League proves that he intends to make good on his promises.

The Capellan Confederation remained almost completely untouched by the Clan invasion. Sun-Tzu is taking advantage of his realm's stability to offer generous contracts to many merc units, quickly swelling the size of the Capellan military. No one knows Sun-Tzu's plans for these forces, and that lack of insight makes other House leaders nervous, including his erstwhile ally Thomas Marik.

The nature of the Confederation and its citizens ensures an almost total lack of opposition to Sun-Tzu's rule, but the vast majority of the remaining Inner Sphere states remain wary of the young ruler. Many observers point to the similarities between his rule and that of his grandfather, Maximilian, who was an accomplished schemer more than a military man. Many fear that Sun-Tzu shares his grandfather's mental instability, as well.

ST. IVES COMPACT

By virtue of its position in the Inner Sphere, the St. Ives Compact avoided the devastation of the Clan war. Because the tiny realm had little to offer in the defense of the Inner Sphere, its small military remains intact, as does its steady economy. The Federated Commonwealth was forced to pull its garrison troops—invited there by Candace Liao to discourage the Capellan Confederation from attempting to reclaim the realm as part of its own—out of the Compact during the invasion. This move left St. Ives somewhat vulnerable, and so the government has begun to offer relatively low-paying but secure garrison contracts to mercenaries.

The Federated Commonwealth war effort also forced it to cut funding to the Free Capella Movement, led by Candace Liao's brother Tormana. Hanse Davion initially supported Tormana Liao's efforts to remove the Federated Commonwealth influence over the people of St. Ives as an irritant and distraction for neighboring Chancellor Romana Liao, but neither Candace Liao, who Tormana seeks to replace, nor Sun-Tzu Liao, whose right to the Capellan throne Tormana challenges, believes their disaffected relative poses any serious threat to their rule. In fact, Tormana's recent, failed effort to cause open war between Houses Steiner-Davion, Marik, and Liao convinced his nephew, Kai Allard-Liao, that the time had come for him to assume leadership of the Free Capella Movement. Despite his success as a warrior, early indications are that Allard-Liao's goals for the Movement will be centered on restoring to the people of St. Ives their cultural heritage, rather than their homeland.

FREE RASALHAGUE REPUBLIC

Devastated by the Clan invasion, the Free Rasalhague Republic has little hope of recovery. The realm lost most of its planets to the war, its economy was destroyed, and its leader, Prince Haakon Magnusson, lost his heart and will to continue when he lost his son to the Clans. Prince Magnusson has filled the gap created by his decimated military forces by allowing ComStar to garrison troops on his worlds. Beyond that one decision, Prince Magnusson has done little to ensure the continuance of his realm.

The Prince grieves deeply for his lost son, more so since Ragnar rejected a rescue attempt by the underground resistance movement known as Ragnarok. The young heir refused to allow his people to sacrifice their lives in useless efforts to rescue him from a fate he is willing to accept.

PERIPHERY

In recent years, the Periphery has undergone as many changes as the Inner Sphere itself. Though no Periphery realm can yet compete with even the smallest Inner Sphere realm in terms of political power, certain Periphery leaders have carved out a substantial power base in that far-flung region of space.

The Periphery continues to grow. As the Explorer Corps, the joint venture between Coordinator Theodore Kurita and ComStar to find the Clan homeworlds, continues to chart new worlds beyond the known boundaries of the Periphery, information on those worlds is recorded in ComStar's database of stellar exploration and star charts. When ComStar opens these records to public access in 3057, those worlds suitable for colonization may soon after be settled by adventurers from elsewhere in the Periphery or any of the Inner Sphere Houses.

ANALYZED TO DEATH

The new breed of political analyst has become the best known and most despised personality appearing on holovid screens in the home of every citizen in the Inner Sphere.

Now an integral part of every news and tabloid show, the PAs, as they are called, minutely scrutinize what will happen in a specific realm within the next six months. The latest trend is for groups of these analysts to create an "analysis special" where they can argue over the sanity and viability of the Free Worlds-Capellan alliance.

Analysts have become commercial personalities, paid to plug products by encouraging the public to buy them soon, before the Federated Commonwealth collapses.

I predict that the political analysts will be rounded up and shot, probably within the next six months. That event will be followed by the collapse of the Federated Commonwealth, and the marriage of Sun-Tzu Liao to Omi Kurita, and...

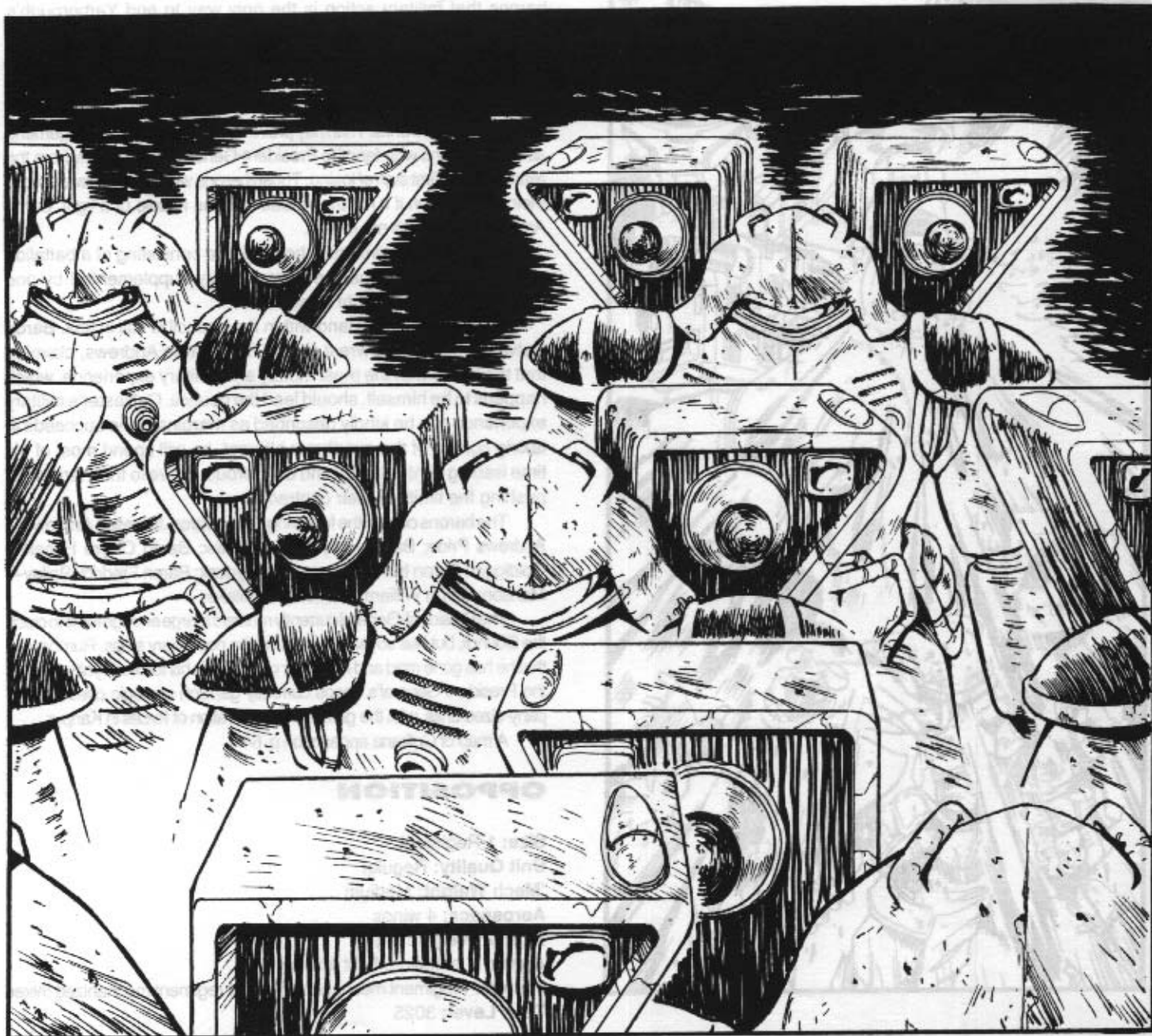
—From an interview with Veronica Effinger, a Political Analyst, Solaris Broadcasting Service, 3055.

GAMEMASTER MISSION BRIEFINGS

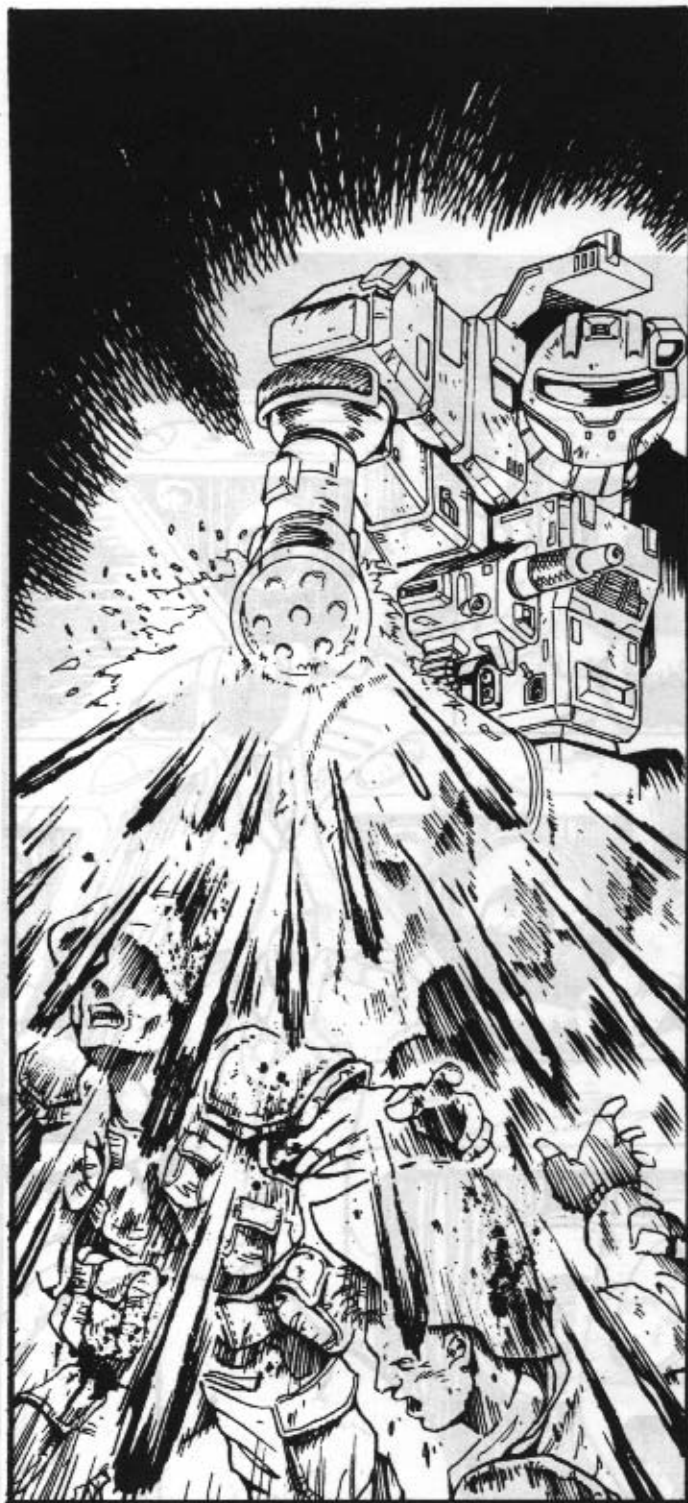
For each contract, the following sections provide the information that the employer prefers not to reveal to the mercenaries. Each gamemaster mission briefing corresponds directly to the information provided for the players—the gamemaster must read both briefings carefully in order to understand the situation completely. The gamemaster mission briefings also suggest, or in

some cases, provide the exact configuration of the player characters' opposition on a mission.

The mission briefings are grouped according to House or organization, political/military designation where appropriate, and contract number in the same order in which they appear in the *Hot Spots* book.



FEDERATED COMMONWEALTH



CRUCIS MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56601-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

Baron Andrews somehow managed to convince the other barons that military action is the only way to end Yarborough's influence for once and all. The barons are devoting what remains of their already stripped assets to hiring mercenaries in an attempt to overthrow the government.

The characters will be expected to work with some Council members' home guard units. This may prove to be a precarious arrangement, as those barons who fear the President-General will withdraw from the alliance at the first sign of losing. Those barons would immediately recall their troops, even if it means retreating in the middle of a fight. Baron Andrews' forces will not retreat.

Each baron maintains a home guard consisting of a battalion of either foot or mechanized rifle infantry supplemented by one company-sized very light armor unit.

The chain of command within the council is still in flux. Baron Calvaster is trying to wrest control from Baron Andrews, claiming that the baron with the most money and military experience, which happens to be himself, should lead the council. Calvaster's military experience can be kindly described as marginal; if he succeeds in taking control of the overthrow attempt, he will spend most of his time issuing contradictory and dangerous orders to the merc units, pushing the limits of their contracts.

The barons control the following cities: Baron Jameson Andrews—Andrews Pride; Baron Holly Kelley—Phlox; Baron Clayre Honart—Goldigger; Baron Calvin Calvaster—Drydock; Baron Fredrick Bailey—Manson; Baron William Rockford—Whitaker.

The President-General currently musters a large enough force to crush the Council, but has so far failed to take the necessary steps. Rumors say that he has gone mad and no longer commands his forces' loyalty. Most of the President-General's troops currently garrison strategic cities in company-sized units, with the greatest concentration of forces in Kanpur.

A map of Gulkana appears on p. 64.

OPPOSITION

Size: 1 Regiment

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: 4 wings

Fighter Weight: Light

Armor: 1 battalion, light armor

Infantry: 1 regiment mechanized SMG, 1 regiment mechanized mixed

Tech Level: 3025

CONTRACT FC 56601-002-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

Marquis Ulitock is known as a reasonable man, but he is understandably bitter at the Steiner-Davion government and Archon Prince Victor in particular. He believes the Federated Commonwealth abandoned his planet with little regard for his subjects' life and livelihood.

Though the Marquis possesses the funds to hire troops of reasonable quality, he does not wield the clout necessary to guarantee timely delivery of supplies to the mercenaries he hires. Supplies eventually arrive, but often late or incomplete. This situation could pose a serious problem for 'Mechs that rely heavily on ammunition. Therefore, the Marquis is likely to give up much in the way of salvage rights in exchange for less pay.

Characters may actually enjoy their stay on Great Gorge. The local population is used to the presence of military troops and has been living in fear since the regular garrison troops were recalled. Many people will greet the characters' unit as saviors. The Marquis spared no expense when building the Great Gorge military base.

OPPOSITION

The gamemaster may use the Light Raiding Party Archetype for attacks on Great Gorge. Historically, most attacks occur away from populated areas, instead targeting the mining areas. Occasionally, raiders attack the cities in an effort to capture civilians to use as slaves.

CONTRACT FC 56602-001-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

The baroness is currently marshaling her forces for another massive thrust to gain a foothold on Hoonar's northern continent. It is increasingly important that Baroness Tsanma conquer Hoonar soon, for her homeworld is beginning to feel the economic drain of the war. Opposition to the baroness' efforts is growing, marked by protests and other signs of unrest. The situation could deteriorate to the point that some mercs may not see a paycheck.

In addition to the uncertainty of payment, the mercs may encounter other difficulties on this mission. The baroness demands total control over her forces, regular or hired, and often leads her troops into battle personally, her *Awesome* blazing away at anything that moves. Supplies will be almost impossible to obtain, as the baroness rules such a poor world that many traders claim to not even know Gronholt's location. The Federated Commonwealth has finally noticed the conflict between these two worlds and may seek to resolve it soon. If the House government sides with Duke Deedman, the characters may find themselves out of work and unable to collect their pay. Interfering in Federated Commonwealth business will also likely make the merc unit unwelcome in that realm for a while.

The characters may have trouble with resistance fighters operating in the southern continent. Though poorly armed, these partisans are determined and have managed to create several problems for troops already stationed there.

The gamemaster can use the Medium Raiding Party Archetype for the baroness' troops garrisoning Hoonar.

A map of Hoonar appears on p. 65.

OPPOSITION

Duke Deedman mounts a force equivalent to the Large Planetary Garrison Archetype. The duke is a competent strategist and is currently fighting a defensive war. He was caught unaware by the baroness' initial attack on Hoonar and could not save the southern continent. He hopes to use the resistance fighters operating from the countryside to regain his precious resources.

CONTRACT FC 56602-002-3

CONTRACT FC 56605-002-6 (RELATED)

BEHIND THE SCENES

The marquis believes his troops should easily crush the uprising and is angry the rebels have survived this long. Each time his troops meet with defeat, the marquis flies into a rage. If the defeat is particularly galling, the marquis uses every angle he can to withhold pay. If he cannot find a loophole in the contract, the marquis simply withholds spare parts and supplies from the characters.

The Public Army (PA) is surviving on their convictions. They lack access to modern weapons and they control only several small towns and one small, major city. The PA offers to pay with agriculturally valuable land. The PA is fairly disorganized, but tries to hide this fact by allowing hired units freedom of command. The PA is desperate for mercenaries of all kinds and can use anyone who accepts their contract. Mercs hired by the PA will see no supplies whatsoever and must rely on salvage.

A map of Cogdell appears on p. 66.

OPPOSITION

(Forces listed include only regular troops.)

Government Troops

Size: 1 battalion

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: Conventional, 1 company

Fighter Weight: Medium

Armor: 2 companies, medium armor

Infantry: 4 regiments, mixed foot and mechanized

Tech Level: 3025

Public Army

Size: 1 lance

Unit Quality: Green

Mech Weight: Light

Aerospace: No

Fighter Weight: NA

Armor: 2 light armor lances

Infantry: 1 regiment, foot rifle

Tech Level: 3025

CONTRACT FC 56603-001-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The FCIS is hiring outside agents for this task for several reasons. First, it wishes to keep its MIO and DMI agents free to concentrate on the organizations' current efforts against the Clans. The Federated Commonwealth intelligence community has recently ignored the various separatist movements in the Davion side of the Commonwealth, instead concentrating their efforts on helping to control the Free Skye Movement in the Steiner side of the super-state. The MIO would rather not admit that it missed the increased activity of the CDP.

Infiltrating CDP is relatively easy, as the organization's internal security tends to be fairly lax. Characters with combat skills can easily get hired as soldiers for CDP's current effort: to take over Maram, then secede from the Federated Commonwealth. They intend to declare Maram "the home for all those who wish to keep Davion blood pure," and hope to add the resources of the neighboring world of Gillingham, which also has strong CDP ties, to their cause.

Special agents must find out the present and future plans of the CDP, report to the FCIS, and implement any necessary actions to stop any CDP plans seen as harmful to the Commonwealth.

For more information, see the mission briefing in Contract IND 56610-001-0, p. 62.

CONTRACT FC 56604-001-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

The planet Kentwood maintains a standing defensive force—the characters' unit is only being hired to defend the factory. Their services should only become necessary if the planetary defenders fail to repel attacking bandits. However, the unit must also realize that Kentwood's citizens might become an ugly mob if the towns around the factory suffer an attack that the merc unit fails to defend against. The characters' unit must also be alert to possible attacks by either of the religious factions gearing up to claim the Treaty Zone. Cerulean does not want its expensive factory damaged so soon after being built.

Most bandit raids on Kentwood are usually poorly organized, but highly destructive. Historically, units defending the purification plant find themselves outnumbered by desperate men and women willing to sacrifice much for the precious commodity fresh water has become.

Defending Cerulean transport ships can also be quite an experience. Bandits usually attack using heavy aerospace forces while DropShips attempt to dock with the cargo vessel and board troops.

OPPOSITION

For attacks against the Kentwood factory, use either the Light or Medium Raiding Party Archetypes. The characters should be outnumbered by the attackers.

Use the Light Raiding Party Archetype to determine forces attempting to board a Cerulean transport ship, but use the Heavy Raiding Party Archetype for attacking aerospace forces.

CONTRACT FC 56604-002-5

BEHIND THE SCENES

From its inception, McRae Quik Construct has indulged in less than ethical business practices. Its latest venture crosses into illegality. Using a front company named Phoenix Recovery Inc., McRae is hiring units to raid Federated Commonwealth worlds near the Periphery, creating as much structural damage as possible and picking up a few specific goods. McRae then offers to rebuild the damaged buildings, charging the Federated Commonwealth outrageous prices by padding its invoices.

McRae will do everything possible to convince their hired guns that they are conducting legal operations. Not surprisingly, McRae will instantly abandon its troops (without pay, of course) if the Commonwealth government begins to catch on, or if the characters ask too many questions. This is bad work for MechWarriors to take, but those down on their luck may consider it the only way to stay alive. McRae will cover all transportation costs. Depending on negotiations, McRae (Phoenix) may also provide full supplies and a technical staff.

Negotiating with McRae is tricky. McRae readily gives all salvage rights to the mercenaries, but will then try to cut their pay drastically. McRae will offer to provide full supplies and tech staff only as a final bargaining chip. The gamemaster should note that most of the parts and supplies that McRae will supply are of questionable quality.

McRae will only target lightly defended worlds.

This is dangerous work, not in terms of potential enemy forces, but because of the consequences of getting caught. The Federated Commonwealth government has yet to catch on to McRae's scam. When they do, the raiding forces may find themselves trapped on a heavily defended world.

OPPOSITION

Until they are caught, the characters will only face Small Planetary Garrisons on worlds within two jumps of the Periphery border, between the Tortuga Dominions and the Mica Majority.

CONTRACT

FC 56604-004-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

Duke Antonio offers good pay and ready supplies, but there are few other advantages to working for Garibaldi. The Duke cares nothing for his hirelings, viewing mercenaries as money that fights. He sees no reason to give up salvage rights to well-paid troops and expects that money to prompt immediate, unquestioning obedience in all his troops.

The working conditions also leave much to be desired. The duke is expanding his military faster than his staff can handle, creating serious organizational and discipline problems, especially between the different mercenary companies hired. Adding to the problem is the general incompetence of General Kalvin Bartamas, the duke's military commander. Mercenaries lack any respect for their leader, mainly because he pilots his *Centurion* with marginal skill. The characters will be assigned to very cramped and uncomfortable living quarters, and their 'Mechs and vehicles will fare little better. The duke tends to leave his weapons of war exposed to the elements, which is hard on equipment in any climate.

Once on the planet, the other nobles may make offers of employment. Accepting such an offer may violate the unit's current contract, making them answerable to the Mercenary Review Board.

A map of Parma appears on p. 67.

OPPOSITION

The forces of Garibaldi and his opponents are listed below. Any mercs will be in addition to these forces. The gamemaster should feel free to adjust these forces to his satisfaction, though Duke Antonio will be most likely to expand his forces.

Duke Antonio Garibaldi II

Size: 2 battalions

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: 1 company

Fighter Weight: Medium

Armor: 1 medium battalion

Infantry: 1 regiment, mechanized mixed

Tech Level: 3025

Capital City: Garibaldis (formerly New Brescia)

Duke Candace Murkoff

Size: 2 companies

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Heavy

Aerospace: 1 lance

Fighter Weight: Light

Armor: 1 medium company

Infantry: 1 battalion, mechanized SMG

Tech Level: 3025

Capital City: Jerzberg

Count Wendkos

Size: 1 company

Unit Quality: Green

'Mech Weight: Light

Aerospace: No

Fighter Weight: NA

Armor: 2 light lances

Infantry: 1 battalion, mechanized rifle

Tech Level: 3025

Capital City: Comptaknott

Baron Codakken

Size: NA

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: NA

Aerospace: No

Fighter Weight: NA

Armor: 1 medium battalion

Infantry: 2 companies, jump laser

Tech Level: 3025

Capital City: Porast

Baron Paladroz

Size: 2 lances

Unit Quality: Elite (Dezgra Clan Nova Cat warriors*)

'Mech Weight: Heavy/Assault

Aerospace: No

Fighter Weight: NA

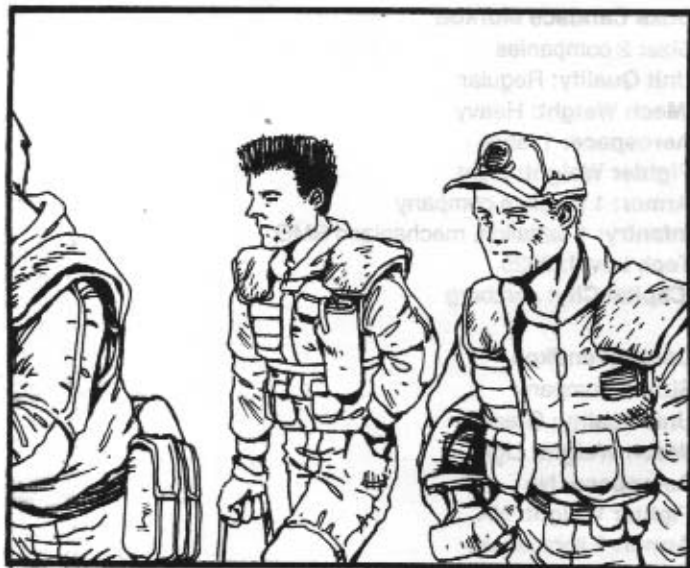
Armor: 1 heavy company

Infantry: 1 battalion, foot SMG

Tech Level: 3050 (No Clan tech)

Capital City: North 80

*This unit is actually a Watch training cadre. In the usual fashion of the Clans, Clan Nova Cat sent their least valuable warriors to an obscure location as a test of their ability to conduct intelligence operations.



SARNA MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56601-003-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Capellan raiders do have a method behind their madness—Sun-Tzu Liao is encouraging scientific research, and one mission discovered platinum on Sarmaxa. The raiding parties usually set up a defensive perimeter while excavation crews mine the platinum. When the defending forces approach, the crews hide the equipment in the mine and seal the entrance, marking it for future crews to reopen.

Several Maskirovka agents present on Sarmaxa monitor the movements of the defending forces and signal to Sian the best time to raid the planet and mine the platinum. The Liao agents also devote major efforts to distracting the Federated Commonwealth government from investigating the regions attacked.

For more information, see the mission briefing on Capellan Contract CC 56607-002-8, p. 59.

OPPOSITION

Any raids on Sarmaxa use a Heavy Raiding Party Archetype. The gamemaster should note that the raiding force will never greatly outnumber the defenders.

CONTRACT FC 56602-004-5

BEHIND THE SCENES

Even though Aldebaran's Steiner-Davion rule has been beneficent, most of the planet's populace supports the Tongs. Characters investigating rumored Tong activity may find their efforts blocked by ordinary citizens, who may physically threaten "nosy outsiders."

The Capellan government and the Maskirovka actively support the Tongs on Aldebaran. House Liao frequently smuggles shipments of supplies and other goods on to the planet or leaves needed materiel on one of Aldebaran's many airless moons. To stop those shipments, characters may find themselves waiting in ambush on a frozen lake or lunar dune.

A map of Aldebaran appears on p. 68.

OPPOSITION

Several different Tong groups operate on Aldebaran, the largest being the Barren Tong. Though internally organized, these Tongs seldomly work together. The Maskirovka training agents are attempting to unite the various factions, but with little success.

Each Tong group varies in size, but none have more than two regiments of troops. Several of the Tongs mount rattletrap tanks and other military vehicles, but none field serious weaponry such as BattleMechs.

CONTRACT FC 56601-009-9

BEHIND THE SCENES

One of the northern islands of Old Kentucky hides a Maskirovka base, records of which were recently discovered on Sian. Those records did not reveal the base's location, however, and the Tong wants desperately to locate it before anyone else. Capellan officials believe that the base contains several technological items of Star League vintage, important records, and several million C-bills' worth of gold and gems.

The Free Worlds raids cover supply runs to the Rostakov Tong and help distract the Federated Commonwealth defenders from the Tong's activities. The Marik commanders leading the raids know nothing of the secret base or the Tongs they are supplying.

For more information on the situation on Old Kentucky, see the Free Worlds League Contract FWL 56608-001-8, p. 56, and the Capellan Confederation Contract CC 56604-001-4, p. 59.

A map of Old Kentucky appears on p. 69.

OPPOSITION

A large and well-organized group, the Rostakov Tong uses major funding from the Capellan government to conduct a campaign of terror against the cities, industries, and leaders of Old Kentucky. The number of Tongs currently operating on the planet is believed to be more than seven regiments, with well over five thousand members. Though the Federated Commonwealth accepts that the characters' unit cannot completely eliminate the Tong, they hope to bring some of their activities under control.

The Tong on Old Kentucky has access to several BattleMechs, including several new Capellan designs such as the *Snake* and *Huron Warrior*.

Most Marik raiding forces consist of the Medium or Heavy Raiding Party Archetype. The Marik attacks rarely take place at the same time or in the same area as Tong attacks.

CAPELLAN MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56607-001-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

Closehold Firms, a Capellan-based corporation, is attempting to take over Alaski Goods. They planted an agent in Alaski in order to stay abreast of upcoming transport runs. Using this information, the company hires troops or passes information to certain criminal elements of the Capellan Confederation and Free Worlds League, and these forces either attack Alaski transports en route to their destination or attack the grounded ships and destroy their cargo. Closehold hopes to force Alaski into bankruptcy, purchase it, and so expand its holdings into the Davion side of the Federated Commonwealth.

Alaski may have trouble paying its hired troops; lost goods and customers has severely hurt the company's bottom line. Alaski offers full salvage rights, hoping that will make up for low pay. An honest organization, Alaski will do its best to accommodate its hired troops.

For more information on this situation, see the Capellan Confederation Contract CC 56607-001-7, p. 58.

OPPOSITION

Closehold uses Light Raiding Parties to attack the Alaski transports, but with at least two lances of aerospace support. Ground-attack forces vary from 'Mechs to the more common infantry and tank units.

DRACONIS MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56601-005-5

BEHIND THE SCENES

Duke Jackson of the Draconis border worlds of Delacruz and Groveld III is currently hiring mercenary forces to raid Conroe and its satellite for the valuable minerals the planet produces. Duke Hobear has alerted Archon Prince Victor to the inevitable attack, but has yet to receive a reply. Naturally, this lack of response angers the duke, who considers Victor's preoccupation with the Free Skye Movement and what he sees as the "whining Steiners" in general to present a major stumbling block to the continuation of the alliance. A successful attack against Conroe will only serve to add fuel to the fire of separatism that is beginning to smolder in the under-defended Federated Suns.

OPPOSITION

For more information on this situation, the gamemaster should read the Draconis Combine Contract DC 56601-002-2, p. 45. The forces listed below represent Duke Jackson's personal guard, which will participate in any attacks on Conroe and its satellite planet.

Size: 1 battalion
Unit Quality: Regular
'Mech Weight: Heavy
Aerospace: 2 lances
Fighter Weight: Medium
Armor: 1 light company
Infantry: 1 battalion, mechanized mixed

If Duke Jackson hires a mercenary unit, a Light Raiding Party joins his forces for the attack. The duke's forces will target Conroe's satellite and may have to fight the miners living on the surface in two small, domed towns.

Combat on the surface of the satellite holds more dangers than standard 'Mech warfare. Breached head armor or critical hits to life support may kill the pilot by exposing him or her to noxious gases or the extreme cold temperature. A player must make a Physical Saving Roll every round a character is exposed to the elements. If the result is unsuccessful, the character takes 1D6 points of damage.

CONTRACT FC 56601-006-6

BEHIND THE SCENES

Duke Benjamin Absola is one of the most offensive nobles in the whole of the Federated Commonwealth. Arrogant, critical, and stubborn, Duke Absola considers his view the only right one, and damn anyone who gets in his way. The duke very vocally opposes the Steiner-Davion alliance; his latest ammunition for showing the foolishness of his leaders includes the Clan invasion and the loss of Draconis March units.

Working with Duke Absola will not be easy. He can hold a grudge for a long, long time. The duke will view any failure by the hired unit to accomplish its missions as a personal affront. Once offended in this way, he will hold a grudge against the unit and do everything in his power to disrupt their employment in the future.

The characters will be in command of their own unit, but must take orders from the duke and follow them to the letter.

Duke Absola's attitude and anti-alliance sentiment has alienated many people and destroyed much of his prestige in the Davion court. His requests for supplies always arrive slowly, but usually complete. This may cause a problem for the mercs.

OPPOSITION

A battalion of medium armor and two regiments of mechanized infantry currently defend Fellain II.

CONTRACT FC 56607-002-8

BEHIND THE SCENES

These worlds have been brutalized by pirates. Unable to provide the protection for which every planet on the Periphery border clamors, Victor Steiner-Davion is trying to save his political skin in this region by garrisoning mercenary troops in place of AFFC regulars. The citizens of all four worlds have rioted, and the situation on Bassfield is very near rebellion.

The citizens of these planets may show a mixed reaction to the characters' presence; while most will be grateful for their protection, some will protest that sending merc units to their planet provides nothing more than lip service to a relatively (and militarily) unimportant region.

The characters may also find the planetary governments difficult to deal with, as each will attempt to keep the characters on their world past the allotted three months.

The terrains and climates will pose special problems for troops defending these worlds. For example, Bassfield's widely scattered, populated island chains are separated by deep oceans, and traveling from one chain to another by DropShip can be difficult and fuel-consuming.

OPPOSITION

The attacking strength of the raiders will never be more than twice that of the defending characters. The Medium Raiding Party Archetype is appropriate for this opposition.

CONTRACT FC 56609-001-9

BEHIND THE SCENES

InterStellar Rescue runs a reputable business, but the recent increase in pirate activities has strained their supplies and their ability to pay their people, including mercenaries. InterStellar Rescue will eventually pay every unit it hires, but perhaps not as promptly as originally agreed upon. Supplies have become a major headache for InterStellar Rescue. The company's main suppliers have been shipping most of their merchandise directly to the Clan border for the relief efforts underway there. Recent shipments have been late and usually lack the most vital components.

The characters' unit will provide defensive cover on the planet near the site of the rescue effort, possibly against continuing hostilities, as the remaining InterStellar Rescue team delivers supplies or ministers to the wounded. The mercs may also plan and carryout missions to rescue hostages taken by pirate raiders. These missions only extend to rescuing hostages on planet; InterStellar Rescue leaves pursuing escaping raiders to the AFFC.

Though the corporate leaders of InterStellar Rescue recognize the severity of the Clan threat, they resent the AFFC high command for adding to the company's burden. Though they have couched their complaints in the mildest terms, InterStellar Rescue feels that the usually cooperative and friendly military arm of the

Federated Commonwealth has turned a cold shoulder to InterStellar Rescue.

OPPOSITION

Aside from the obvious opposition of hostile forces, the characters may encounter bad weather, impassable terrain, or reluctant local governments. The gamemaster should use his imagination to explore the many possibilities of this situation.

TAMARIND MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56601-007-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

ComStar ROM agents learned of Word of Blake Toyama terrorist plans to strike at the HPG facilities on Pencader, Khon Kaen, and Madiun. Unable to reach these worlds in time to stop their rivals, and still working to gain acceptance from the Federated Commonwealth, ComStar informed that government of the impending strikes. Continually on the lookout for ways to harass the Word of Blake's protector, the Free Worlds League, Archon Prince Victor has arranged for mercenary troops to always be on guard around the HPG facilities on those worlds.

ComStar could not tell the Federated Commonwealth the time or method of attack, and so even though the governments know of the impending attack, they cannot completely prepare for it. Word of Blake ROM and SAFE agents infiltrated the communications and command facilities on both worlds and will strike from hiding.

If the characters' unit manages to defeat the Word of Blake terrorists, they earn themselves a determined and unforgiving enemy. Defeating the terrorists also makes ComStar grateful, and a beneficial friend for the future. The Federated Commonwealth may also send the unit on harassing raids against the Marik forces stationed on the three Circinian worlds currently "on loan" to the Free Worlds League.

OPPOSITION

The attacking World of Blake force will consist of the Light Raiding Party Archetype, but with 3050 tech. At the gamemaster's discretion, the terrorists may also field a Heavy Lance of the new Word of Blake *Grand Crusaders* (see p. 102, **ComStar Sourcebook**, for game stats). If the characters' unit captures one of these 'Mechs, the Federated Commonwealth will exchange a similar weight 'Mech for the hulk of a *Grand Crusader*. The characters cannot count on reinforcements from the local militia because those troops will be defending against an attacking Marik force working in concert with the Word of Blake. The gamemaster should note that the attacking force will not outnumber the characters' force by more than 250 percent.

CONTRACT FC 56610-001-6

BEHIND THE SCENES

These raids/insertions are fairly straightforward missions. However, the Federated Commonwealth hires small mercenary companies and freelance agents to perform these raids because of their relatively high mortality rates.

Any time a 'Mech unit lands on a planet whose defending forces vastly outnumber them, it takes a big risk. And even though they are specially trained to survive under just these conditions, special forces agents often fare little better. In this particular case, agents may find their job made even more difficult by the Word of Blake ROM agents freely roaming these worlds.

The success of these raids often depends on the unit's ability to communicate with their JumpShip at regular intervals. Agents must make less frequent reports to their superiors, which could prove risky if made via HPG transmissions. All HPG facilities in the Free Worlds League are operated by Word of Blake members, who regularly scramble ordinary messages. Any message they suspect of hidden meaning may not reach its destination, or may reach it much too late for the information to be valid.

Agents receive a minimum of six months to perform their duties, but may receive more time if their mission proves successful. The Federated Commonwealth may also accept the idea of a team of agents operating on the same world, creating a better chance of successfully gathering accurate information.

For more information, see Free Worlds League Contract FWL 56601-003-3, p. 51.

OPPOSITION

The targeted Marik worlds are well defended by regular troops and full of SAFE and Word of Blake ROM agents intent on weeding out agents from other realms. If taken prisoner, mercenary troops and agents should not expect to be rescued.

DONEGAL MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56603-001-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Games make a nice break from the backstabbing politics of normal Inner Sphere life. This contract has no hidden agenda. However, the duke and his son hire only the best pilots: they are not interested in kill records. They look for pilots who show a strong affinity for their machines, a unique and flexible fighting style, and an instinct for pushing the limits of theirs and others' capabilities. The Games give the characters a great opportunity to show their stuff for potential employers, as the events attract a large number of nobles.

The gamemaster is encouraged to have as much fun with this encounter as possible.



OPPOSITION

The player characters will be up against the best pilots in the Inner Sphere. The gamemaster should feel free to develop unique sporting events and assign appropriate opposition, making the players part of a team if possible. Characters should be careful, though—all combat in The Games uses live ammunition, and a stray head shot is a very real danger.

CONTRACT FC 56606-001-6

BEHIND THE SCENES

The rumors are true. Nashsan has been making regular runs across the Clan border to smuggle supplies to guerrilla forces still fighting against the Clans. When the company began on this course, it usually lied about the mission's actual destination for fear that hired troops would refuse to accompany them. After receiving several reprimands for such deception from the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission, Nashsan tries to be more honest about their missions' destinations. This policy may actually increase the number of units interested in their contracts, as many troops are anxious to take action against the Clans.

Despite, or perhaps because Nashsan ships are renowned for mounting good security forces, they come under attack quite often—good security usually protects valuable goods.

To facilitate speedy shipping throughout the Inner Sphere, Nashsan maintains many storage facilities scattered throughout the Lyrans side of the Federated Commonwealth. The majority lie near the Periphery border, where planet populations are smaller and more concentrated. Nashsan often hires forces to defend these facilities, then leaves them there for months without contact, even though the company promises to check in regularly. Over the years, many units believed themselves abandoned and raided the warehouses they were hired to protect, hoping to recoup their losses and find a way off the planets. Though word has spread slowly that Nashsan never abandons its employees, and so fewer mercs take matters into their own hands, the company has taken the precaution of further tightening security on many of its storage centers.

OPPOSITION

Use the Medium Raiding Party Archetype for attacks against Nashsan transport ships, but add extra aerospace forces.

The gamemaster may use any appropriate Raiding Party Archetype for attacks on Nashsan storage facilities. Keep in mind that bandits who find Nashsan facilities are determined to get at whatever is inside.

For those Nashsan ships on smuggling runs to Clan-held worlds, the gamemaster should choose which, if any, forces will meet the characters' unit. The characters may adjust the Clan opposition by using Clan bidding tactics.

CONTRACT FC 56610-002-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

On the surface, the LFTA is an exciting organization to work for. The far-flung trade routes of the LFTA allow characters to travel anywhere in the Inner Sphere, and the money-making potential is high. Expeditions to recover lostech caches can prove extremely profitable for player characters because the LFTA often offers the hired unit a cut of the loot in order to cut salary costs.

Working for the LFTA can be a less enjoyable experience, however. LFTA traders make many an illegal deal with Free Worlds and Capellan companies, deals which often turn sour and leave the hired guns caught in the middle. Many employers have stranded their hired units under these conditions.

Expeditions into the distant Periphery harbor many dangers. Pirate bands, lost colonies that do not want to be found, diseases, and natural predators all may take their toll on a unit.

Agents hired to observe problem employees may find themselves ordered to "terminate" the worker with little recourse to protest the order.

Even scouts sent to discover the viability of new markets may face stiff opposition from competing businesses or individuals who wish to maintain a monopoly on the market. The Free Worlds League is a very good example of this, though the LFTA is aggressively trying to infiltrate those markets.

Any former employer will tell a player character that working for the LFTA is a double-edged sword.

OPPOSITION

As detailed above, units can meet an almost endless variety of opposition on missions for the LFTA. The characters may also find themselves facing opposition from the LFTA itself, particularly on Periphery exploration runs. When the LFTA negotiates to pay the hired unit a lower wage in exchange for a share of any booty found on the expedition, this sometimes proves profitable, though characters can find themselves short on cash at the end of a contract with the LFTA. Individual employers within the LFTA may cheat hired units out of their share of discovered treasure by hiding it from them.

CONTRACT FC 56611-001-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

When Acrux managed to purchase a majority of the farmland of Valloire, the remaining small farmers protested that the corporation's presence would squeeze the profitability out of their tiny businesses. Though it looks increasingly unlikely that this eventuality will ever come to pass, many of the farmers on Valloire decided to make sure. The farmers organized themselves and began making minor nuisance attacks. Eventually, these attacks came to the attention of Gorman Growing Industries, a Free Worlds League competitor of Acrux. Not anxious to compete against a large Lyrans corporation, agents from GGI contacted the farmers and patiently fanned their anger.

Supplying the farmers with weapons and training, GGI encouraged the FLRM to make ever bolder strikes. Drawn by the organization's apparent power, the FLRM has grown substantially and plans to expand to other worlds where Acrux owns property.

The FLRM's current leader is Willis Gorman, a cousin of the CEO of GGI. Willis has gradually steered the members of the FLRM away from their original goal of voicing their grievances and turned the organization into a covert tool of corporate warfare.

Contrary to Acrux's belief that the FLRM is nothing more than a temporary annoyance, the FLRM is highly organized, wields state-of-the-art weaponry, and keeps its true size a well-guarded secret. Any player characters who accept Acrux's evaluation without attempting to verify that information will be ground up and spit out by the FLRM. If the characters survive infiltrating the farmers' organization and attempt to report to Acrux the true size of the FLRM, they will meet with skepticism. Acrux may support the player characters, or may decide that the characters are simply trying to soak the corporation for all they can get and decide to break the contract.

OPPOSITION

The FLRM mounts nearly three regiments of infantry, distributed across Valloire in company- and squad-sized units. Several of these units are also on nearby worlds, including Acrux itself. These troops use a wide variety of weapons, including some Star League personal weapons. Several squads are jump capable. These efficient troops were trained by retired SAFE and Maskirovka agents.

PERIPHERY MARCH

CONTRACT FC 56601-008-8

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters are being hired to track down and exterminate one of the most lethal, cruel pirate bands in the history of the Inner Sphere. The inhabitants of the Periphery worlds held by Morrison's Extractors, Pain and The Rack, give testament to the fate of those unfortunate enough to be captured by these raiders.

Morrison's Extractors have Star League technology, including BattleMechs, at their disposal, and lots of it. Led by Hopper Morrison, a defector from the Circinus Federation, the raiding band came into existence when Morrison discovered a large Star League cache several years ago. Captain Morrison and his unit immediately went rogue and took the lostech with them.

Within a few short years the unit expanded to nearly a regiment and recently absorbed Simonson's Cutthroats, further increasing its size.

The characters must learn as much as possible about the Extractors and self-styled King Morrison. Unfortunately, no one is sure of the location of the Extractors' homeworlds, or if Morrison still commands the band of pirates. Extractors raids have become less frequent of late; some observers believe this is the result of an internal power struggle.

Once they find the Extractors' homeworlds, the Federated Commonwealth will add the 11th Arcturan Guards to the characters' unit in an attempt to destroy the Extractors, no easy task. Judging by the unit's size and battlefield technology, both worlds should be well defended. Ambush points line well-traveled routes on both worlds.

When conducting raids, the Extractors usually attack several targets at once, each with approximately a battalion. The Extractors mistakenly believe that their skill matches their advanced weaponry: in fact, they are often simply lucky enough to escape from fights they should lose.

OPPOSITION

Morrison's Extractors

Size: Approximately 2 regiments (1 regiment per homeworld)

Unit Quality: Veteran

'Mech Weight: Medium and Heavy

Aerospace: 1 company

Fighter Weight: Heavy

Armor: 1 battalion, split between both worlds

Infantry: 2 companies per world

Tech Level: 3050 (80 percent of units), 3025 (20 percent of units)

CONTRACT FC 56604-005-8

BEHIND THE SCENES

A nasty creature, the nolan is almost three meters tall, heavy, and fierce. Covered with a thick hide, the nolan uses its two sets of arms to attack. Its three-fingered hands end in razor-sharp claws that cut easily through most material. A nolan bite will kill its victim within minutes if not treated. Adding to its natural defenses, the nolan's chameleon-like abilities allow it to blend almost completely into its surroundings.

Nolans usually travel in packs of three to five, sometimes more. These ferocious creatures are aggressive even in the face of gunfire.

While on Engadine, the characters will live in quarters on the Lord President's personal grounds. The Lord President has hired so many troops that he is now converting outbuildings into barracks, and so the unit's lodging will be uncomfortable. To the disappointment of the rather naive Lord President Daniel and others on Engadine, most of the troops hired so far are of a rather unsavory nature, which means the characters must be cautious even in their own quarters. Units larger than seven members hunt as a single group. Smaller units will be attached to another group.

Lord President Daniel is a decent man, concerned both about the balance of nature and the welfare of his citizens. He enjoys the thrill of the hunt, and though the nolans are threatening increasing numbers of villages, the Lord President will not allow wholesale destruction of the creatures. The income brought in yearly by The Rooting certainly helps maintain the planet, but Daniel also insists on the nolans' place in the planet's delicate balance. Troops may use only personal weapons, excluding SRM launchers and heavy machine guns.



OPPOSITION

Nolan

BLD	11
REF	9
INT	8
LRN	3
CHA	10 (This number indicates the creature's ferocity)

Attacks

Nolans may make up to three attacks per round, three claw attacks, or a combination of a two claws and a bite. Nolans can only bite once per round.

Powers

Fear: The nolan has the ability to freeze an attacker with fear. Every character encountering a nolan must make a Saving Roll. The target number for the roll equals the nolan's Charisma minus the character's charisma. If the die roll result is equal or greater than the target number, nothing happens. If the result is less than the target number, the character can do nothing but stare at the nolan for a number of rounds equal to the Margin of Failure. The character is not physically paralyzed, just in shock, and can move if attacked. However, the character cannot fight back until the effect wears off.

Poison Bite: The nolan's bite is poisonous to humans. If bitten, a character must make a Physical Saving Roll. If successful, the character will be able to remain conscious for a number of

rounds equal to the Margin of Success. If the roll fails, the character falls unconscious immediately and will die within two minutes if not given an antidote (which the Lord President will supply to the characters).

Thick Hide: The nolan's hide is extremely thick and tough, which reduces all ballistic damage the creature takes by 3. Its hide does not reduce laser damage.

UNAFFILIATED WORLDS

CONTRACT

FC 56520-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Federated Commonwealth intends to take advantage of every opportunity to keep House Marik busy, and the situation on Angell II has proved ripe for such action.

The characters may face more than they bargained for with this assignment, as the rich are gearing up to defend against the coming rebellion.

The leader of the resistance movement, Peter Staragali, is an able and intelligent man, but most of his willing followers know little about warfare. Staragali will rely heavily on the characters to train his troops and lead them into battle.

The Federated Commonwealth will provide transportation to and eventually from Angell II, and will also supply sporadic weapons shipments.

The Federated Commonwealth's long-term plan for Angell II is to train the rebels well enough with guerrilla actions to succeed at open rebellion. The Federated Commonwealth promised the resistance leaders aid in the opening days of the rebellion from a government-supplied merc unit. The Federated Commonwealth expects the initial training to take 6-12 months.

The rebels' current force numbers almost six regiments of infantry, 75 percent foot, the remainder mechanized. Only 10 percent of the force is considered trained.

For more information about the situation on Angell II, see the Free Worlds League Contract FWL 56601-001-0, p. 50.

The merc unit's current opposition appears below. Please note that the upper echelons of society may hire reinforcements to bolster these forces.

A map of Angell II appears on p. 70.

OPPOSITION

Size: 2 companies

Unit Quality: Regular

Mech Weight: Light

Aerospace: 1 company, conventional fighters

Fighter Weight: Light

Armor: 2 companies, light armor

Infantry: 2 regiments, mechanized SMG

Tech Level: 3025

DRACONIS COMBINE

GALEDON MILITARY DISTRICT

CONTRACT DC 56601-002-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

Duke Jackson requires complete control of his hired forces, a condition most merc units may find difficult to work under. The duke usually leads his troops into battle and will undoubtedly do the same when he attacks Conroe. Fortunately, the duke is an able military commander and pilots his *Katana* with skill. Unfortunately, the duke has several things going against him.

First, he cannot obtain supplies quickly or regularly. The ISF is aware of the duke's activities and is purposefully slowing the shipments in an effort to cripple the duke's ability to wage war. Needed replacement parts and ammunition may be late or may not show up at all. The duke maintains a stockpile of certain supplies, but for the exclusive use of his private guard.

The duke's other problem lies in Luthien. Theodore Kurita knows that his border-world rulers grow restless at their planets'

weak defense and feels the pressure to return units to those planets. Theodore has given permission for these nobles to hire their own garrisons, but also strongly recommended that they not attack any Federated Commonwealth worlds. Duke Jackson understood this directive, but intends to go ahead with his plans anyway. Duke Jackson commands both the affection and respect of his fanatically loyal followers. The characters could find themselves in trouble with Kurita authorities if the duke continues his raids.

For more information, see Federated Commonwealth Contract FC 56601-005-5, p. 39.

The force listed below is the duke's personal guard that he may use to support the characters' unit in the main invasion.

Size: 1 battalion

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Heavy

Aerospace: 2 lances

Fighter Weight: Medium

Armor: 1 light company

Infantry: 1 battalion, mechanized mixed

OPPOSITION

The opposition is a Medium Raiding Party, representing the mercenary unit hired by Duke Hobear.

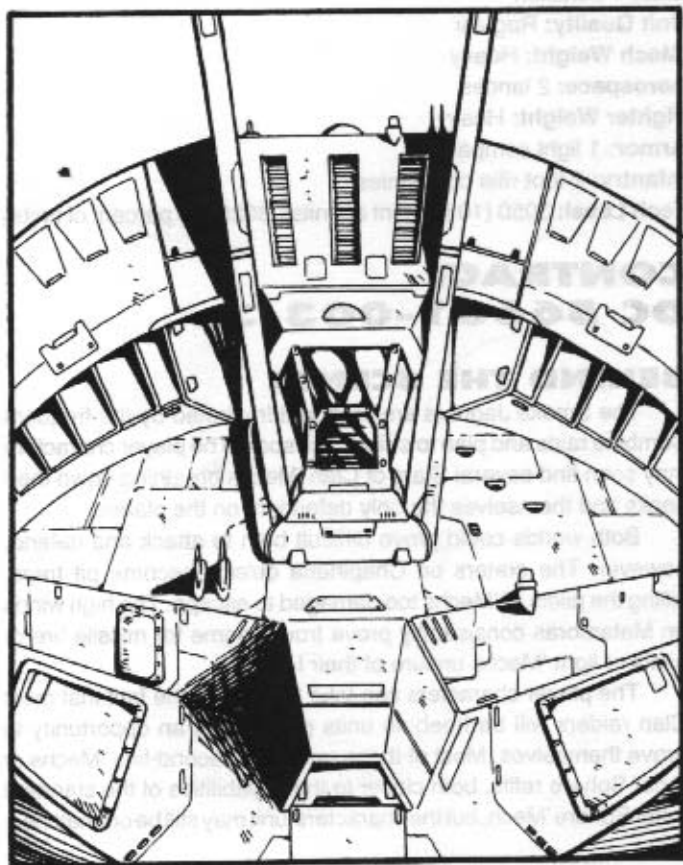
CONTRACT DC 56602-003-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

Isesaki holds an honorable reputation within the Combine and outside the Combine is regarded as a stable and honest trading cartel. They treat their mercenaries well and fairly, which alone is enough to attract many mercenaries to their employ. Though Isesaki makes every effort to retrieve its hirelings from situations gone bad, their record for doing so is less than 100 percent.

Providing protection on shipping routes along the Federated Commonwealth has been relatively trouble-free, aside from attacks by angry Draconis March regulars. Isesaki itself successfully fended off those attacks. The Isesaki runs into the Outworlds Alliance have met some aggressive pirate raiding, particularly on those trading ships delivering to Dneiper and Milligan's World, two of Isesaki's regularly scheduled deliveries. The 'Mechs of Vance Rezak's pirates, Band of the Damned, recently pounded an Isesaki defense force into the ground, then stole their entire cargo.

The majority of the pirate raids seem to be launching from Antallos (Port Krin), which has become a main supply depot and fencing source for pirates. Drunken pirates often choose to take out their frustrations on and go "joyriding" through the relatively defenseless Outworlds Alliance worlds.



OPPOSITION

For attacks against Isesaki ships on the Davion-Kurita border, use the Light or Medium Raiding Party Archetype. The local forces will try to bluff the Isesaki ships into going away, but if that fails, they will attack.

For attacks in the Outworlds Alliance, use the Light Raiding Party Archetype. These forces will appear pitifully uncoordinated, as the pirates piloting the attacking machines are usually very drunk.

For more information on Vance Rezak's Band of the Damned, see Draconis Combine Contract DC 56601-002-3.

PESHT MILITARY DISTRICT

CONTRACT DC 56601-002-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

Korramabad currently suffers from the chaos of never-ending combat. The end is nowhere in sight, as both sides seem determined to come out the victor in this battle.

Bentlen wishes he could champion his cause using only loyal warriors of the Dragon, but knows that it is not possible. Bentlen has already hired many mercenaries, but he needs even more and is finding it hard to find enough money to pay his troops. Though he can afford to pay some cash, he is also offering raw materials from Korramabad if he wins the fight. Timothy's one advantage is that he counts many friends in the Luthien court and can use these contacts to find the characters a good contract when he no longer needs them. Timothy will use this bargaining chip to its fullest advantage to gain the assistance of good mercenaries.

The rebel leader is finding it difficult to coordinate the actions of his hired army. Already he has lost several battles where his numerically superior forces were disorganized. Fortunately, his forces have so far refrained from fighting among themselves.

Duke Imushiu refuses to hire mercenaries in honor of the late Coordinator Takashi Kurita's "death to mercenaries" order. If captured by the duke's forces, mercenaries may be executed outright or subjected to humiliation, hard labor, or torture. The duke's personal militia is large and well equipped.

Vance Rezak's Band of the Damned has been raiding both sides in the conflict impartially, though the duke seems to be the favored target recently. Duke Imushiu controls the planet's industrial-grade diamond industry at the moment, which may explain his popularity as a pirate target.

Characters captured by Vance Rezak's pirates may find themselves digging ditches or, if they're lucky or skilled enough, working on the pirates' 'Mechs. Also short on MechWarriors, Rezak may invite player characters to join the pirate band, after they pass a loyalty test.

OPPOSITION

The current regular forces for all sides appear below. The gamemaster should feel free to change these forces to fit his campaign and group.

Duke Taikara Imushiu

Size: 4 companies

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Heavy

Aerospace: 2 lances

Fighter Weight: Medium

Armor: 2 medium battalions

Infantry: 3 mechanized laser battalions

Tech Level: 3025

Knight Timothy Bentlen

Size: 1 battalion

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: None

Fighter Weight: NA

Armor: 1 medium battalion

Infantry: 1 mechanized SMG battalion

Tech Level: 3025

Vance Rezak's Band of the Damned

Size: 1 battalion

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Heavy

Aerospace: 2 lances

Fighter Weight: Heavy

Armor: 1 light company

Infantry: 2 foot rifle companies

Tech Level: 3050 (10 percent of units), 3025 (90 percent of units)

CONTRACT DC 56601-003-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Smoke Jaguars are tired and frustrated by the frequent Combine raids and plan to strike back soon. The player characters may soon find several Stars of Clan 'Mechs breathing down their necks and themselves the only defenders on the planet.

Both worlds could prove difficult both to attack and defend, however. The craters on Chapineria quickly become pit traps, killing the pilots of 'Mechs too damaged to escape. The high winds on Matamoras consistently prove troublesome for missile fire or pilots of light 'Mechs unsure of their footing.

The player characters can take heart from the fact that most Clan raiders will be freebirth units grasping at an opportunity to prove themselves. Most of these units use second-line 'Mechs or Inner Sphere refits, both closer to the capabilities of the standard Inner Sphere 'Mech, but the characters' unit may still be outmatched.

OPPOSITION

The gamemaster may attack with any force. Keep in mind that the Clans will abide by their rules of engagement and bidding rituals, however angry they may be.

CONTRACT

DC 56602-001-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

Over the years, Brocchi's Cluster has consistently proven to be a dangerous place. As in the Dark Nebula in Lyran space, many men and women have lost their lives in the attempt to explore or hide away in the Cluster, but some have successfully navigated portions of the Cluster and use it to their own advantage (see Contract DC 56604-001-04). For example, pirates are known to inhabit planets within the Cluster and are familiar enough with their small section of the Cluster to navigate in and out of the region. Other groups made their way in and remained hidden, making a life for themselves inside the Cluster. These groups know nothing of the Clans or their electrifying effect on the Inner Sphere.

The most difficult problem for the player characters to overcome is lack of navigational knowledge. The large number of stars concentrated into such a small region makes maneuvering a JumpShip very difficult; the slightest damage may leave the ship stranded. The proximity of these stars and the radical effects of planetary gravity in such an area of space could easily tear a JumpShip apart.

Before the characters attempt to enter the Cluster, they must find a guide for their dangerous journey. The *tai-sho* has heard of a man who entered Brocchi's Cluster and returned: a man named Roberts Morita, whose last known location was the Smoke Jaguar-occupied world of Kabah. A wild and athletic man in his 90s, Roberts is a tried and true adventurer and will gladly guide the characters into the Cluster if they can extract him from the Clan front.

The inhabitants of the few settled worlds in the Cluster are earthbound, their interstellar transport long-ago destroyed. Life on these worlds is often chaotic; gravitation effects from other stars and nearby satellites create tremendous tides and bizarre, twisted terrain. The people on these worlds are understandably wary of strangers and usually aggressive.

The characters may even happen upon the world owned by Hogo Manati (see **Opposition**). This planet appears to be a veritable stockpile of treasure and artifacts belonging to the Draconis Combine, all hidden in the planet's intricate cave systems.

If the characters successfully establish a Cluster world as a base, the *tai-sho* will offer the characters' unit the honor of making the first raid into Clan territory. Even if they decline, the *tai-sho* gives the characters a glowing recommendation for their next contract.

OPPOSITION

Traveling within the Cluster will be very dangerous for all the reasons stated above, and because many desperate pirate bands still hide in the Cluster. The gamemaster should choose an appropriate Raiding Party Archetype for any pirates the characters' unit encounters. These pirates' machines should be of lower-than-normal quality, however.

The gamemaster may also decide that the characters stumble on one of Hogo Manati's caches (see Contract DC 56604-001-4). In this case, the characters will meet the hired troops that Prefect Manati sent to retrieve his treasures.

Brocchi's Cluster currently hides a Clan Nova Cat explorer ship. Intrigued by the possibilities Brocchi's Cluster offers, this Clan intends to use the duration of the Treaty of Tukayyid to explore the group of stars. The gamemaster may determine the size of this Clan unit when and if the characters discover it.

CONTRACT

DC 56604-001-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

Hogo will provide accurate coordinates to two planets in Brocchi's Cluster.

The first set of coordinates send the player characters to a planet that Hogo uses as a personal cache to hide vast numbers of valuables that he has collected through various illegal means throughout the decades. Many of these items are ancient and precious artifacts that are sacred to the Draconis Combine. Hogo wants to recover his treasures before the occupying Clans accidentally discover them. Hogo stores his treasures carefully; the characters must simply pick up the crates and storage containers they find and return to McAlister. The cache planet is largely uninhabited so the characters need not worry about local interference, but most of the treasures are hidden in difficult-to-reach limestone cliffs overlooking a treacherous shore pounded by huge waves.

The second planet serves as the base of a small pirate band that Hogo often hired to raid Combine worlds in search of artifacts. Prefect Manati wants to send a long-overdue payment to the pirates via the characters' unit, but this meeting could prove tricky. The pirate group does not know about the Clans, and so cannot understand why Hogo failed to pay them. The unit must use all the resources at their disposal to deliver the money and escape unharmed.

OPPOSITION

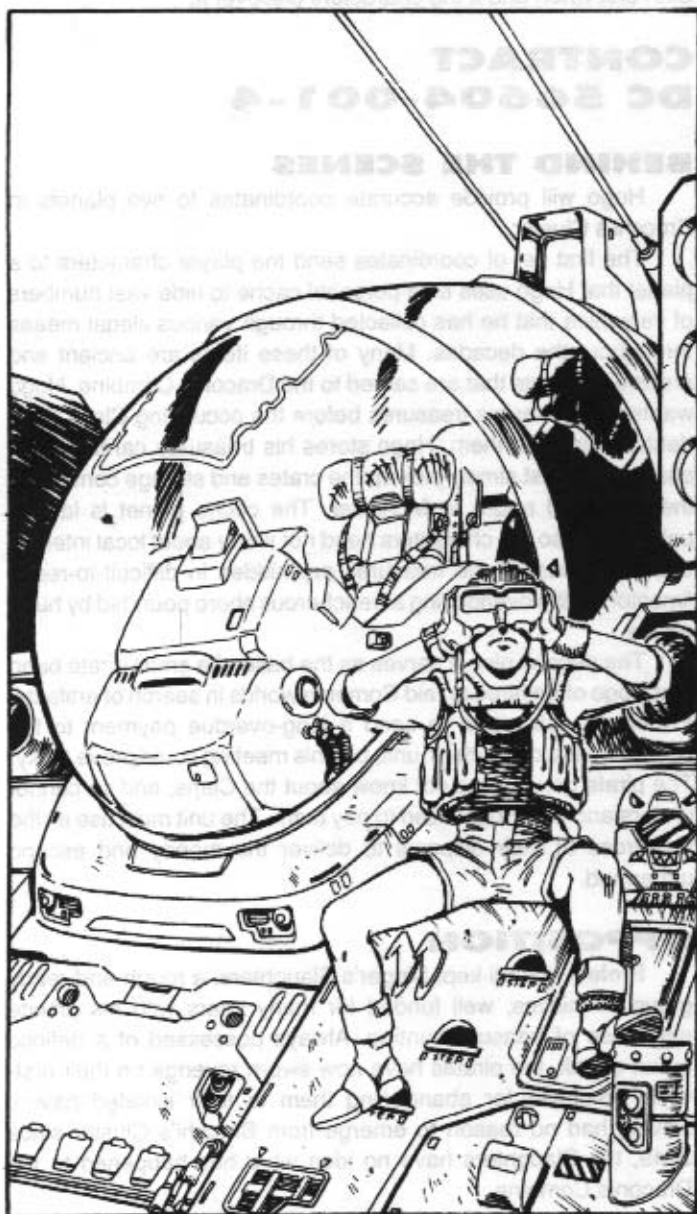
Prefect Manati kept Singer's Slaughters, a rough-and-ready group of thieves, well funded for many years with his private enterprise of treasure hunting. Always possessed of a definite mean streak, the pirates have now sworn revenge on their erstwhile employer for abandoning them to their isolated haven. Having had no reason to emerge from Brocchi's Cluster since 3049, the Slaughters have no idea what has happened to the Draconis Combine.

The pirate band mounts a force configured as a Light Raiding Party Archetype. Though the unit appears to be undisciplined and sloppy, they fight well as a unit, skillfully led by their commander, an able MechWarrior named Tanaka Singer. Thanks to the work they completed for Hogo, the pirate unit is well equipped.

CONTRACT DC 56607-001-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

Though Dragon's Wings Mining is a legitimate company, it is far smaller than it appears. This corporation is a front company for the Draconis Combine. On being hired, the characters will undergo a screening process to test their true loyalty to their employer. If they pass



this test, the Draconis Combine government offers the characters' unit the task of finding the Clan homeworlds. Units who accept this assignment become members of the Explorer Corps, the joint (and secret) cooperative effort between the Draconis Combine and ComStar to locate Strana Mechty. The most difficult part of this task is deciding where to search—the Inner Sphere remains completely without a clue to the direction and distance to the homeworld of the Clans.

The characters can expect to join forces with other mercs, but this should be a fairly smooth operation, as all mercs hired will be of top caliber.

Those whose loyalty remains in doubt will be sent to garrison worlds that the Combine discovered in their search for the home of the Clans. These planets serve as the supply and life lines for the Explorer Corps, and as such warrant protection. Observant characters stationed on these worlds may suspect the deception as they discover the minimum mining equipment and miners located on any of these worlds.

Characters hired for the Explorer Corps will spend many months in space scouting for the Clan domains. The characters will only stop for the occasional R&R and to investigate planets as potential supply depots.

As with any venture into the unknown, this assignment holds danger. For example, all JumpShip transportation contains an element of uncertainty; the units' JumpShip might fail and leave them stranded in space for a very, very long time. The characters may also run into Clan units traveling to or from their homeworlds. Finally, pirate attacks present an ever-present threat, especially near and in the Periphery. The characters should expect to meet at least one band of distant Periphery raiders.

The gamemaster can use this contract to send the player characters on campaigns into the Periphery and beyond. Even if they never find the Clans' homeworld, the unit will be able to conduct a campaign of interference, interrupting communications, destroying supplies and ammunition, and generally creating problems for Clan garrisons.

OPPOSITION

Pirate bands that attack Explorer Corps ships will consist of Light Raiding Party Archetypes. They will pilot low quality 'Mechs and be of Regular troop quality. Clan opposition should be appropriate for the nature of the mission the player character unit undertakes.

BENJAMIN MILITARY DISTRICT

CONTRACT DC 56610-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

All intelligence work is dangerous, and this assignment is no exception. The extreme watchfulness required by intelligence operatives is compounded in this case because the player characters must be wary of discovery by the Clans as well as the ISF

agents they must work with. Most members of the ISF consider hired agents and scouts beneath them and an insult to the ISF as a whole. If the ISF agents do not kill the mercs in some underhanded way, they may engineer their failure.

In addition, characters rarely find themselves on the world to which they were tentatively assigned. Missions often change at the last minute to maintain absolute secrecy, and sometimes the ISF meddles in merc postings: regardless of the cause, these last-minute changes make it difficult for agents to adequately prepare themselves to fit into their surroundings.

Characters must learn that few people can be trusted behind Clan lines. Even the populations of most Clan-held worlds hold varying attitudes toward their conquerors. Some view the Clans with hate and disgust and will do anything to help the characters in their mission. Others consider the Clans saviors, come to rescue them from the warfare and destruction plaguing the Inner Sphere. Others seem not to care, usually those who experienced the heavy hand of a conquering force more than once in their lifetimes. These people have no inclination to either hinder or help the characters in their mission.

By far the hardest party to trust will be ComStar. The failure of Operation Scorpion forced many Precentors in the Clan-held territories to seriously question their loyalties. While some still pledge their allegiance to the reformed ComStar, many adhere to the ways of the Word of Blake and do what they can to support that organization. Others took advantage of the chaos ComStar fell into to use their positions to gain personal power by brokering information. The latter are particularly dangerous people because they retain few morals and no loyalty.

OPPOSITION

While facing no direct military threat, agents and scouts stationed on any Clan-held world must deal with the efforts of the Watch, the Clans' attempt at an intelligence organization. Though held in low regard by their parent Clan, members of the Watch work hard at their task and deal harshly with captured enemy agents. More than the Clans, Kurita ISF agents pose the greatest danger to mercenary agents through treachery or direct violence.

CLAN TERRITORY

CONTRACT

DC 56601-004-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

So far, the Clans have honored their agreement to not return to Wolcott, but Coordinator Theodore's aggressive raiding policy could change that situation. Both the Nova Cats and Smoke Jaguars are chafing at their inability to retaliate against the constant harassment of Combine forces, and the Clan leaders may eventually ignore, if not sanction, a rogue unit striking at Wolcott.

The fast response Arm of the Dragon, the Ryuken, have been primarily stationed on Wolcott and done an excellent job harassing the Clans. Even the best unit cannot control its opponent's re-



sponse, however, and several times the regiment has been caught in a tight position, rescued only by the present garrison force on Wolcott. The characters' unit would serve this same function. Good performance will be rewarded by the opportunity to participate in a raid.

OPPOSITION

While garrisoning the planet does not place the unit under a direct military threat, the unit may be called on to extract members of the Ryuken from failed raiding missions. The gamemaster should create any Clan force he considers appropriate in these situations.

FREE WORLDS LEAGUE



MARIK COMMONWEALTH

CONTRACT
FWL 56601-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

This revolution could be the one that changes life on Angell II. The rebel faction making this attempt to overthrow the government is large, though a bit unorganized. The rebel leaders recognized this weakness and invited Federated Commonwealth agents to their planet to train the rebel troops for the revolution. Part of that training includes the tactics of terrorist actions, and the Federated Commonwealth is supplying the rebels with weapons, as well. The rebel leaders have also been promised the assistance of a small merc unit during the initial days of the invasion. Whether or not the unit arrives is up to the gamemaster. The rebels do not have 'Mechs, but have anti-'Mech training.

The government wants the rebels destroyed at all costs and will authorize any methods necessary. They do not intend to take

prisoners for interrogation because they believe that the rebel force is much smaller than it seems. Characters employed by the government who act in a humanitarian fashion may find themselves up before a hostile government representative convinced that the only good rebel is a dead rebel. For more information, see Contract FC 56520-001-0, p. 44.

A map of Angell II appears on p. 70.

OPPOSITION

The rebel force is listed below. The Federated Commonwealth mercenary unit that may or may not show up to launch the open rebellion would be a Medium Raiding Party Archetype.

Size: NA

'Mech Weight: NA

Aerospace: NA

Fighter Weight: NA

Armor: NA

Infantry: 6 regiments: 75 percent mixed foot, 25 percent mixed mechanized. Only 10 percent of the entire force is considered trained (Regular troop quality) and half of the trained troops are considered anti-'Mech capable. The remainder are untrained (Green or lower). Approximately 5 to 10 percent will be considered trained (improve to Regular) each month.

CONTRACT

FWL 56601-002-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

During the Fourth Succession War, when the Federated Commonwealth took control of Oliver, Zosma, and Marcus, guerrilla movements sprang up among Marik loyalists. Janos Marik allowed their pleas for assistance in throwing off the Steiner-Davion yoke to go unanswered, and eventually the resistance dwindled to almost nothing. Thomas Marik now hopes to breathe new life into these hidden warriors, but this time it will be an uphill struggle. Even the rebels on these worlds have thrived under Steiner rule and may be reluctant to begin the fight again.

OPPOSITION

The 3rd NAIS Cadet Cadre defends Oliver. Though a Green unit, they are highly motivated and aerospace heavy, ready to defend the small ring of asteroids circling the planet. The characters' unit may count as their only advantage the fact that their drop-off point is several hundred kilometers from the factory site, where the entire Cadre is stationed.

Planetary militias garrison Marcus and Zosma. The gamemaster may use the Large Planetary Garrison for each of these worlds, spreading the defending forces across the planets' surfaces.

CONTRACT FWL 56601-003-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Federated Commonwealth is using both Ford and Loric as launching points to infiltrate agents onto Marik border worlds. Though both planets are well defended, a successful attack would seriously disrupt intelligence operations, setting the schedule back by months. A unit that succeeds in taking and holding part or all of either world should expect Federated Commonwealth reinforcements to arrive within a few weeks. The gamemaster should read the Ford and Loric entries in the Federated Commonwealth section. For more information, see Contract FC 56610-001-6, p. 41.

OPPOSITION

The 7th Lyran Regulars currently defend Loric. Though smaller than a full-sized RCT, the unit is quite capable and eager to prove its worth. The strength of the 7th is listed below. The world of Ford is defended by the 14th Lyran Guards RCT, a veteran unit looking for an excuse to attack a Marik force.

7th Lyran Regulars

Size: 1 regiment

Unit Quality: Green

'Mech Weight: Medium-Heavy

Aerospace: 2 wings

Fighter Weight: Medium

Armor: 2 medium battalions

Infantry: 2 regiments, mechanized SMG

Tech Level: 3025

CONTRACT FWL 56602-001-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

Marik's SAFE and Word of Blake ROM currently function as two separate intelligence organizations working toward similar goals in the same realm. Though Captain-General Marik has yet to show obvious reliance on either organization, he is taking steps to track both groups' actions.

In addition to maintaining its standard operations, Thomas Marik has charged SAFE with conducting overwatch on the Word of Blake ROM agents currently working alongside the Marik organization. This additional task has taxed the organization's abilities almost to the breaking point, and so the government has approved funds to hire mercenary agents to pick up the slack in order not to lose the intelligence network in place along the Marik-Federated Commonwealth border. Agents hired for Marik intelligence missions will be assigned to one of the following worlds.

Cavanaugh II

A bitterly cold world that its inhabitants fondly call "Tharkad II," Cavanaugh II is currently home to the 6th Donegal Guards RCT. SAFE recently lost contact with the last of its operatives on

Cavanaugh thanks to LIC Molehunters. SAFE considers this a good location for a merc operative: the world is not particularly important, but SAFE prefers not to be blind to any AFFC activity.

Penobscot

This world played a relatively unimportant role throughout the Succession Wars, but communications and traffic to the planet have recently increased, and SAFE intends to find out why. The population of this heavily wooded planet is mainly concentrated into two major cities and protected by the Penobscot TMM.

Giausar

This world is one of the few that support dinosaur life similar to that of Terra's distant past. These rare creatures live mostly in harmony with the human population, aside from the occasional frightening encounter and even rarer deaths. The 4th Crucis Lancers RCT garrisons Giausar.

Timbiqui

Famous for its beer and ale, the world of Timbiqui has managed to maintain its natural beauty despite suffering frequent raids as a border world. Half-serious rumors claim that ilKhan Ulric Kerensky wishes to conquer the world for the beer alone. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 10th Lyran Regulars are stationed on this planet.

OPPOSITION

Molehunters, LIC agents trained specifically to find and eliminate enemy agents, cover all Steiner-Marik border worlds. These agents pose formidable opposition; they are good at what they do and have made eliminating SAFE agents from their worlds a top priority.

Character agents' status as mercenaries may affect their treatment if captured. Rather than dealing with the merc as just another agent, the LIC may try and hire the character to work as a double agent for the LIC. An agent who accepts such an offer creates the opportunity to explore a whole new realm of adventure.

RIM COMMONALITY

CONTRACT FWL 56602-002-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Members of Parliament of Lesnovo have traditionally and repeatedly voiced their opposition to the Marik government, but most Free Worlds League members have done the same at one time or another. Because Lesnovo hired mercenaries for its defense, many other members feel that the planetary government has gone beyond the pale and attracted unnecessary attention to itself. Dame Silver responds by saying that if her world was better protected, this measure would not have been necessary.

The characters will face several problems while garrisoning the planet. They must repel all pirate attacks, from the various small

bands operating just outside League borders who usually target manufacturing and water centers, and those originating in the Marian Hegemony—more brutal assaults that often result in citizens lost to slave labor.

The Rim Commonality government may attack the mercenary unit to save their embarrassment before the Free Worlds Parliament. Under these circumstances, the characters would face well-trained troops piloting advanced 'Mechs.

The mercs may also have to fight to protect the Lesnovo potato. This vegetable may contain a chemical harmful to cancer cells, and Dame Silver intends for her planet to benefit from this discovery. She will gladly share the results of her research with the rest of the Inner Sphere, but expects certain benefits in return. Unfortunately, others fail to understand this attitude of enlightened self-interest. The NAIS does not trust a less prestigious institution to conduct thorough research and may decide to forcibly obtain samples for their own studies. Dame Silver also fears a preemptive strong-arm move from House Marik before she has a chance to negotiate for favorable terms.

These threats may be exacerbated by a lack of supplies. Dame Silver's lack of political clout and the recent upheaval she created in the Rim Commonality government mean that needed supplies may not arrive. Dame Silver will try to compensate by offering better salvage rights. She is also eager to negotiate for payment in land rather than money.

OPPOSITION

For attacks by pirate bands other than from the Marian Hegemony, use the Light Raiding Party Archetype. These raiders try to avoid engaging the characters' unit in order to collect as little damage as possible to their 'Mechs.

For attacks by the Marian Hegemony, use the Medium or Heavy Raiding Party Archetype. These forces will eagerly attempt to engage the characters' unit and crush it completely. Any mercenary captured will be taken prisoner and transported back to Alphard, the Marian capital world, as a slave.

The NAIS will use an elite unit piloting the most advanced weapons and equipment as a strike force against Lesnovo if they decide to attack. The characters' unit must engage the NAIS force as it searches for samples of the potato. The NAIS strike team has one company of 'Mechs.

STEWART COMMONALITY

CONTRACT

FWL 56602-003-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

First Minister Jefferson may not have time to make amends for the mistakes he has made. Several movements are calling for change and plan to unseat the first minister through peaceful or not so peaceful means.

The circle of people the first minister can trust constantly grows smaller. Not even ten of the 77 members of the Amity Congress still

support Jefferson, including the second minister and the Amity secret service.

The characters have a difficult task; the first minister intends to tour the planet offering reforms and solid plans to rebuild the economy. Assassination attempts will be commonplace on this tour, but staying at home and meeting with the Amity Congress may be equally dangerous.

Jefferson wants to implement a last-ditch effort to save his job—he needs for the characters to uncover enough dirt to quiet several key opposition members quickly enough to stop an impeachment vote. The first minister's main political opponent is District Servant Anderson, who is secretly backing the second minister to take power. Anderson has indulged in several torrid affairs lately, but so far has successfully kept them under wraps. Armed with evidence of these events, the first minister could persuade Anderson to at least temporarily drop his move to impeach.

Unfortunately, the Amity secret service also pledges its loyalty to Anderson, and the characters may find themselves fighting off trained assassins even within the first minister's estate.

OPPOSITION

The first minister faces opposition from every corner. Characters must be on their guard at all times against terrorist organizations and even against the Amity secret service.

CONTRACT

FWL 56603-001-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

Wolf's Dragoons did not look at this closely enough to discover that it is a lie. There are no pirates. The baron is attempting to convince the worlds of Saonara, Obrenovac and Eleusis to join Ruschegg in forming their own duchy. The leaders of the three worlds are reluctant to join forces because they do not trust the baron, so Keeling is giving them incentive to join by secretly raiding their worlds. This is the characters' real task. The characters' unit will be accompanied by a company from the baron's militia, and the combined party will raid only the less populated areas of the planets, avoiding all contact with areas where people might identify the attackers and report to the planet's leader. If these "raids against pirates" go well, all three worlds will likely join the baron. Only the Duke of Obrenovac suspects that Baron Keeling may be up to something.

Baron Keeling is a schemer of the first water and will stop at nothing to eliminate those who get in his way. Despite the fact that he is universally distrusted elsewhere, the world of Ruschegg has grown wealthy under his rule and his subjects love him.

If the characters discover their true mission and confront the baron with his lie, he will give them two choices: continue their employment or face his militia. If the characters manage to escape their employment with the baron, he will immediately begin to plot his revenge. One way he may attempt to do that is by inviting the characters' unit, through a third party, to the 'Mech games played

on Hardcore in the Magistracy of Canopus. A great fan of the games, the baron mounts his own team, which has won several titles. Keeling will try to crush the characters' unit during this competition.

If the characters fail to discover the baron's deception, he may continue their employment by sending them against the Green Mountain Boys, an elite merc unit currently in the service of the St. Ives Compact. The unit's commander began as a MechWarrior in the baron's employ, but quit after discovering his employer's cruel streak. The baron has sworn revenge against the unit and intends to destroy it.

OPPOSITION

All three worlds mount defenses equivalent to the Light Planetary Garrison Archetype. However, a company-sized Word of Blake force is currently stationed at the HPG facility on Eleusis and will help the planetary defenders if needed. This type of defense should give the characters a hint that all may not be as it seems.

ZION PROVINCE

CONTRACT

FWL 56604-001-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

The situation here is explosive. Though the Zion Province is small, it is wealthy, and the Free Worlds League does not plan to let it go without a struggle. So far, Marik does not intend to force the will of the Free Worlds League on the province, even though Zion's rulers appear serious about secession.

Zion's biggest problem in the coming conflict is its size. If not properly defended, this small realm will fall easily to the Free Worlds League army. Because the Marik-loyal ComStar faction Word of Blake currently controls all the province's HPG stations, the members of this tiny coalition could easily find themselves without communications and facing an internal attack.

In its favor, the Zion Province enjoys the support of the Federated Commonwealth. Surprisingly, ComStar has also come out in support of Zion's desire for self-determination. The Federated Commonwealth supports the province for obvious reasons, and has promised the support of token troops if necessary. ComStar professes to support the tiny nation because it wishes to see all those nations who wish it enjoy political freedom. They also probably support the province simply because they know it will annoy the Free Worlds League and the Word of Blake.

Special forces agents hired by the Zion Province to find out more about the Marik-Liao alliance may have to stand in line behind the agents of every other Inner Sphere intelligence agency. Though SAFE and Word of Blake ROM are working hard to keep their realm's secrets, which makes covert operations dangerous for agents, the current rate of success is above average. Because the two Marik agencies are also attempting to infiltrate the upper levels of the Zion Province government, some hired special forces agents

will be assigned to counterinsurgency operations within the province.

As of now, the characters' unit is the only merc unit in the province employed by the province government. Though the Zion Province garrison is composed almost entirely of mercenaries, they work for the Free Worlds League. Provincial officials are attempting to lure these men and women away from the central Free Worlds government.

OPPOSITION

The Zion Province will not secede without adequate forces to defend its worlds, and so characters need not worry about being hung out to dry as the only defenders on a planet.

The Free Worlds League will attack using lightning strikes and heavy assaults immediately on learning of the decision to secede in an attempt to take the small province quickly. In such an event, the province will receive outside help from the Federated Commonwealth and ComStar. The House will likely send mercenaries to shore up the most troubled areas of the province, and ComStar will send small strike teams to battle the Word of Blake contingents at the HPG facilities in the province and retake control of communications.

DUCHY OF

GRAHAM-MARIK

CONTRACT

FWL 56604-002-5

BEHIND THE SCENES

Ryan Iceships considered itself relatively safe from pirate attacks because it rarely delivers to the Periphery border, yet it recently has been the victim of several pirate attacks. The CEO of Ryan Iceships has decided to hire mercenaries to protect his ships and his crew, for whom he genuinely cares.

The problem is twofold. Ryan Iceships have been attacked by pirates hiding in an abandoned star system cut off from the Free Worlds League at the start of the Succession Wars. The planet's cities still stand, but the population died from lack of water shortly after the first Succession War began. These pirates were lucky enough to find a prime spot from which to conduct raids in a variety of directions, and are pirating ice to supply their base. If the characters can track the pirates to their home planet, Ryan Iceships or the League government may pay them to destroy the pirates.

In addition to these raids for practical purposes, Ryan Iceships has also been the victim of corporate raiding. HighPoint Traders often hires unscrupulous mercenaries to raid its competitors and chose Ryan Iceships as its current target. Though HighPoint has been accused several times of engaging in criminal corporate activities such as raiding, the charges never stick. For more information on HighPoint Traders, see Contract FWL 56604-003-6, p. 54.

OPPOSITION

For the pirate band, use the forces listed below. The raiders' 'Mech forces are marginal but their aerospace arm consists completely of Veteran-quality pilots.

For attacks by HighPoint Traders hirelings, use the Light Raiding Party Archetype. Triple the number of aerospace fighters rolled.

Pirates

Size: 1 company

Unit Quality: Regular

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: 1 company

Fighter Weight: Medium

Armor: None

Infantry: 1 company, foot SMG

Tech Level: 3025

THE PROTECTORATE

CONTRACT FWL 56604-003-6

BEHIND THE SCENES

HighPoint Traders takes the saying "you have to spend money to make money" to an obscene extreme. Though the corporation wears a beneficent public mask, that facade hides a corrupt, profit-hungry company prepared to use any means necessary to make money.

While everything that HighPoint says in its contract is true, the situation is rarely as straightforward as it looks. For example, HighPoint often hires troops to defend its warehouses, then tricks these troops into attacking the holdings of another corporation and stealing their goods, claiming that one of their warehouses has been taken over by either pirates or a competitor. The company then orders the unit to "re-take" the facility and load the goods aboard a DropShip for safety.

HighPoint's method of using scouts to discover new markets simply means that at the slightest hint of competition on a planet they serve, HighPoint hires a unit without morals to utterly destroy the competition, at which point HighPoint moves in and corners the market. The company does not bother to lie to the mercenaries on these missions.

Agents hired to monitor the competition will eventually receive orders to do "anything necessary" to stop certain developments. If the hired agent refuses these orders, the agent may soon find himself on the run from other agents hired by HighPoint to "eliminate the troublemaker."

HighPoint ensures the loyalty (and silence) of all its mercenaries by paying well. Any units inclined to talk about their former employer after working for HighPoint often find themselves unable to get work, and in some cases, permanently injured or dead.

HighPoint is currently challenging Correlated Traders in a covert war of shady business practices. HighPoint appears to have

the upper hand at the moment. For more information on Correlated Traders, see Contract FWL 56604-004-7, below.

The upcoming marriage of Isis Marik to Sun-Tzu Liao presents a whole new vista for HighPoint's unique marketing techniques. In an effort to get a jump on its competitors, HighPoint has begun to take advantage of fortuitous "pirate raids" by offering to help jumpstart the economy of Liao planets damaged by such unscrupulous entrepreneurs.

OPPOSITION

The characters' unit will meet opposition of one sort or another on every mission for HighPoint, not the least of which is the Free Worlds League authorities. If mercenaries perform well for HighPoint, the corporation may bribe authorities into freeing their hirelings.

Though characters will also run into defending enemy 'Mech units and counterintelligence agents, HighPoint's biggest opposition at the moment comes from Correlated Traders. This company uses similar business practices to HighPoint and is pursuing their covert war with equal enthusiasm.

ABBAY DISTRICT

CONTRACT FWL 56604-004-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

Though most trading companies conduct their business honestly, Correlated Traders is not among those companies. Though less cruel than HighPoint Traders, Correlated runs many of its operations the same way, including tricking their hirelings into raiding Steiner and Periphery worlds for goods and supplies. However, even Correlated balks at raiding Marik worlds; they feel a certain loyalty to their home nation.

Correlated also needs agents to conduct its covert war with HighPoint (see Contract FWL 56604-003-6), but rarely stoops to using assassination as a business tool. Correlated prefers to create public embarrassment and economic ruin, requiring their agents to perform extensive information-gathering rather than physical operations.

Correlated is one of the few trading companies that actively explores the deep Periphery for new markets or goods. The company has already rediscovered several lost colonies. Although many of these worlds have welcomed the offworlders, some have proved hostile. As a result, Correlated often deploys 'Mech forces on these planets. The company has also discovered valuable resources on several of these worlds, including a large platinum mine on one uncharted planet. So far Correlated has successfully kept its Periphery explorations secret from its competitors and House Marik. ComStar, however, learned of Correlated's closely guarded secret when a Correlated vessel encountered a ComStar Explorer Corps ship recently.

Occasionally, Correlated hires an actual pirate band to raid a Periphery world to generate business for itself.



OPPOSITION

Characters working for Correlated Traders encounter much of the same opposition as listed in the HighPoint entry, p. 54. In addition, Correlated mercenaries frequently encounter pirates. But instead of engaging these raiders, Correlated often attempts to trade with them and establish commercial ties with them. Not all pirate bands, however, accept these overtures.

Sometimes Correlated posts hired units on newly discovered Periphery worlds to help secure its outposts. If the unit has been troublesome, the firm may intentionally strand them on one of these distant planets.

DUCHY OF ANDURIEN

CONTRACT

FWL 56605-002-6

BEHIND THE SCENES

BZS is currently the sole firm to offer the new vaccine for the branth, which makes BZS' main competitor, Biological Exports, Inc. (BEI) rather eager to obtain it. Although the powerful predators of Lopez's jungles have led BZS to hire 'Mech units primarily, BEI hit squads have created a need for infantry units as well.

'Mechs used to capture Branth must be fitted with a special tranquilizer gun. Weighing almost one ton each, these tranq guns are one of the few weapons strong enough to take down a branth without damaging it. Although branth-hunting might seem like an amusing diversion to many MechWarriors, these beasts are quite fast and strong enough to take on a light 'Mech, which is the only class of 'Mech maneuverable enough to catch one.

OPPOSITION

Branth **BattleTech** and **MechWarrior** game statistics are listed below. Fortunately, branth usually travel alone, although some do travel in mated pairs. Usually these pairs form when newborns are present and remain together for a year.

In addition to the branth, BEI strike teams may try to raid a BZS encampment to steal the branth vaccine. These strike teams usually attack with several squads of infantry.

Walking MP: 5

Running MP: 7

Cruising MP (flight): 6

Flanking MP (flight): 0

Punch/Kick Damage: 2 points

Tail Lash Damage: 1 point, Piloting Skill roll with a +1 modifier required to prevent falling

BLD: 20

REF: 14

INT: 9

LRN: 7

CHA: 10 (indicates the animal's presence)

Punch/Kick Damage: 7D6 + 8

Tail Lash Damage: 5D6 + 4

Armor: A branth has 6 Armor Points in each part of its body for purposes of resolving **BattleTech** weapon fire. The branth's head, however, has only 3 points. If any location is breached, the branth falls unconscious and dies within minutes.

Powers:

Fear

Any character who encounters a branth must make a Saving Roll to resist the creature's fearsome appearance. The target number is the branth's CHA minus the character's CHA. A successful roll means the character acts normally in the branth's presence. If the roll fails, the character becomes filled with fear for a number of rounds equal to the roll's Margin of Failure. The character may move, but cannot attack the creature.

Toxic Spit

Some branth, usually females, have a toxic saliva that they spit at attackers. This highly acidic spit burns most material on contact. Unless characters are wearing a Hostile Environment suit or heavy body armor, they take 3D6 Damage Points for 1D6-1 rounds (1-round minimum). The spit does no damage to BattleMech armor.

To tranquilize a branth, the attacking 'Mech must be in physical combat range. Make a normal to-hit roll to determine the attack's success. If the test succeeds, subtract 3 points from the creature's BLD. The branth must then make a Saving Roll against its BLD to stay conscious. Branth may make up to 2 physical attacks per round. These may consist of two punches or a punch and tail lash.

UNAFFILIATED WORLDS

CONTRACT

FWL 56607-001-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

When it first landed troops on Circinian worlds, the Free Worlds League claimed to be merely "borrowing" the worlds for "temporary use." The Circinians were in no position to refute this claim, given the superior Marik military forces arrayed against them. The Circinians, however, still bristle at this blatant show of force and their vocal protests have evolved into annoying (non-lethal) terrorist attacks. As a result, the Circinians treat any Marik mercenary unit as the oppressor's lackeys. The players will not be safe at night if they are outside the Marik base.

The Circinian worlds have proved strategically invaluable for the Free Worlds League, which is reluctant to give up these prime spots. The League is hiring a small merc company to help keep the worlds in check, rather than defend them against any invader.

The characters' unit will have to perform crowd control when Circinian demonstrations heat up and act as a defense force if the protests become violent.

The characters will be treated as pariahs outside of the Marik base. Few people will talk to them, and even fewer will aid them in any way.

After approximately six months, a Circinian force will attack the characters while the Marik troops are away on a raid. Circinian 'Mechs form most of the force, but it will include several mercenaries as well.

OPPOSITION

The Circinus Federation is secretly hiring mercenaries to liberate the planets under Free Worlds occupation. They hope to free all three worlds at once, but will take what they can get. Because the characters' unit is the only outside garrison force protecting Marik bases, these mercs hit them the hardest. The Marik government has not garrisoned the other two worlds, as the occupying troops on those worlds have experienced little trouble.

Size: 2 companies or any force double the size of the characters' unit

Unit Quality: Green

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: None

Fighter Weight: N/A

Armor: None

Infantry: 1 battalion mechanized SMG

Tech Level: 3025

CONTRACT

FWL 56608-001-8

BEHIND THE SCENES

Three separate forces are fighting for control of Old Kentucky, the site of an abandoned Maskirovka training base. Although

House Liao's guerrilla troops are ostensibly allied with Marik forces, the Liao fighters have not let the Marik troops in on a big secret—a second Maskirovka base hidden on one of the planet's northern islands. This base is believed to contain several Star League artifacts and many records that were presumed lost. The Rostakov Tong alone know about the base.

The Marik commanders are not completely duped, however. Thomas Marik actually cares little about the world, and the characters' unit is a token force. Even though the Free Worlds League promised supply drops, these shipments arrive sporadically at best.

OPPOSITION

The Federated Commonwealth is hiring troops as well to counter the guerrilla attacks, and so determining the exact forces present on the world at any given time is impossible. Use these troops to create encounters and keep the player characters busy. The characters will be able to strike several supply depots when their supplies get low as well. See the Federated Commonwealth Contract # FC 56601-009-9, p. 38 and Capellan Confederation Contract CC 56604-001-4, p. 59 for more information on the Rostakov Tong and the Federated Commonwealth presence.

A map of old Kentucky appears on p. 69.

CONTRACT

FWL 56610-001-8

BEHIND THE SCENES

The unit will help infiltrate the Federated Commonwealth's Dark Mirage research base, famous for its illegal research on the DNI project (see the **MechWarrior** adventure **Unbound** for more information). The facility is again breaking new ground with weapons technology, and House Marik wants in on it.

Security at this facility is tight, but the characters can infiltrate its lower levels disguised as workers.

Most often the characters will relay data back to the Free Worlds League, or sneak onto the testing fields to recover unused munitions or components.

If detected, the characters probably end up in a Federated Commonwealth prison. The Commonwealth shows the characters no mercy because they are hirelings. They treat them the same as captured SAFE agents.

OPPOSITION

LIC Molehunters saturate the Dark Mirage base, constantly searching for enemy agents. The Molehunters hound the characters if they even suspect they are agents.

If the mission is successful and the unit has obtained valuable information, SAFE may not want to let them go either, for fear that others will obtain the data. Their employers may give the unit a choice of permanent employment with the Free Worlds League or death.

CAPELLAN CONFEDERATION

CONTRACT CC 56501-001-9

BEHIND THE SCENES

Turgenev does need Yee found quickly, because Barras' numerous intelligence operatives would also like the drug. The Maskirovka does not yet know about the drug, but they do know Yee is defecting and want to find out why.

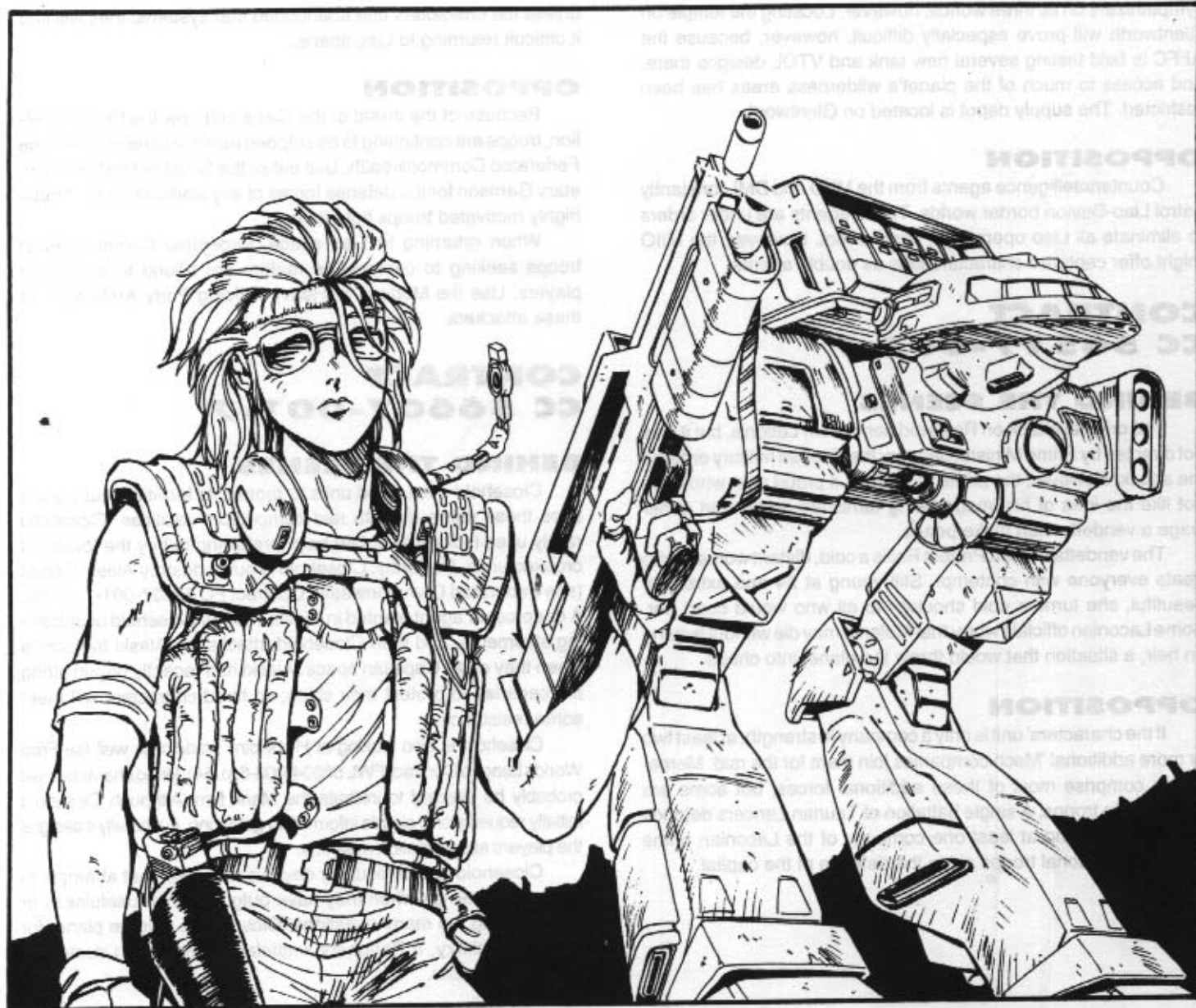
The drug seems to work well so far. However, it also causes extreme nausea that occurs about two hours after it's ingested.

Irma Yee is on Barras looking for a Magistracy agent, who will accompany her to Canopus. Although Irma is in the right place, the agent is having problems reaching her.

OPPOSITION

The Maskirovka presents the most dangerous opposition here. The Capellan secret agency does not know why Irma is defecting and will do almost anything to capture her.

Other opposition will come from an agent from the Magistracy. He has caught wind of the Maskirovka attempts to find Yee and is hiring some troopers to assist him.



CONTRACT CC 56512-001-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

House LuSann wants more than simple recon raids. A recently discovered cache on Jacson detailed the location of a hidden Liao supply depot. Unfortunately, the incomplete documents left out the planet's name. LuSann scholars have narrowed the depot location down to either Sirdar, Glentworth or Frazer, but the exact location can only be determined with a map that is hidden in an abandoned Buddhist temple on one of the planets. Once the unit finds the supply depot, Liao forces will extract it during a raid.

Recon on any of these worlds is not easy. Sirdar, Glentworth and Frazer all contain military bases on constant alert in case of a Liao attack. The characters may be able to find help from Liao sympathizers on all three worlds, however. Locating the temple on Glentworth will prove especially difficult, however, because the AFFC is field testing several new tank and VTOL designs there, and access to much of the planet's wilderness areas has been restricted. The supply depot is located on Glentworth.

OPPOSITION

Counterintelligence agents from the MIIO and DMI constantly patrol Liao-Davion border worlds. These agents are under orders to eliminate all Liao operatives, hired or not. However, the MIIO might offer captured characters jobs as double agents.

CONTRACT CC 56517-001-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

The original attack on Rollis did come from Laconis, but it was not directed by Prime Minister Jagnon; the Taurian military ordered the attack. However, the prime minister is a proud man who does not like the idea of his image being tarnished and would rather wage a vendetta than make peace.

The vendetta has left Prefect Rollis a cold, distant woman, who treats everyone with contempt. Still young at 24 and extremely beautiful, she turns a cold shoulder to all who would court her. Some Laconian officials worry that Melanie may die without leaving an heir, a situation that would throw the planet into chaos.

OPPOSITION

If the characters' unit is only a company in strength, at least two or more additional 'Mech companies join them for the raid. Mercenaries comprise most of these additional forces, but some are Rollis militia troops. A single battalion of Taurian Lancers defends Laconis itself, and at least one company of the Laconian prime minister's personal troops aid in the defense of the capital.

CONTRACT CC 56604-001-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Confederation is attempting a strategy that has proved effective for the Free Worlds League. The hired unit will bypass Federated Commonwealth border worlds and strike at planets behind them. Instead of retreating back to Capellan space, the unit proceeds forward to raid again. The Capellans will grant complete salvage rights to the unit, thus eliminating much of the need for supplies.

The Federated Commonwealth command, however, expects this tactic from Liao units, and so the players can expect stiffer resistance than normal. This resistance may take the form of additional defending troops, traps and prepared ambushes. And unless the characters use abandoned star systems, they will find it difficult returning to Liao space.

OPPOSITION

Because of the threat of the Clans and now the Skye Rebellion, troops are continuing to be stripped from the Davion side of the Federated Commonwealth. Use either the Small or Medium Planetary Garrison for the defense forces of any world attacked. These highly motivated troops fight fiercely.

When returning to Liao space, Federated Commonwealth troops seeking to capture the raiders are bound to attack the players. Use the Medium or Heavy Raiding Party Archetype for these attackers.

CONTRACT CC 56607-001-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

Closehold does need units to protect its facilities, but often it uses these same units to raid competitors' facilities. Closehold rarely uses trickery to obtain help, preferring to buy the loyalty of crooked units. Currently, Closehold is out to destroy Alaski Goods (see Federated Commonwealth Contract FC 56607-001-7, p. 39). A deep-cover agent planted in Alaski informs Closehold of upcoming shipments, and then Closehold attacks the Alaski transports when they enter Capellan space. Alaski has recently begun hiring mercenaries to protect their ships, so hired characters will meet some resistance.

Closehold is also looking at HighPoint Traders as well (see Free Worlds League Contract FWL 56604-003-6, p. 54). Hired characters will probably be directed to infiltrate the Marik firm. Although Closehold initially requests only simple information gathering, eventually it assigns the players assassination missions.

Closehold is a particularly devious employer that attempts to strand its hirelings when they have outgrown their usefulness or begin asking too many questions. Closehold's favorite planet for this is Astrokazy, a Periphery wasteland littered with destroyed cities and 'Mechs.

OPPOSITION

Use the Light Raiding Party Archetype with triple the number of aerospace fighters and no conventional support for the defenders of Alaski ships.

When raiding a competitor's holdings, characters may also encounter opposition ranging from infantry troops to BattleMechs.

Agents infiltrating HighPoint Traders face HighPoint agents who are constantly watching for infiltrators.

UNAFFILIATED WORLDS

CONTRACT CC 56603-001-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

Sun-Tzu desperately wants to keep the Barren Tong alive and effective. A recent influx of new recruits, however, has led to a breakdown in the Tong's organization and discipline. Hired units will assist Maskirovka agents training Tong members. Contracted strike teams, meanwhile, will make critical attacks on AFFC military outposts. See the Federated Commonwealth Contract FC 56602-004-5, p. 38, for more information.

A map of Aldebaran appears on p. 68.

OPPOSITION

Hired units will face mercenaries employed by the Federated Commonwealth, and so the exact size of opposing forces is unknown. In addition, hired units may come under attack from other Tongs vying with the Barren Tong for control of Aldebaran.



CONTRACT CC 56604-001-4

BEHIND THE SCENES

Liao and Marik forces work together against the Federated Commonwealth forces on Old Kentucky. Although the guerrilla forces contain no Marik troops, the Free Worlds League coordinates raiding efforts with Tong attacks.

Neither the Federated Commonwealth nor Free Worlds League troops know that a second abandoned Maskirovka base exists on Old Kentucky. The Rostakov Tong knows of the base's existence, but has been unable to pinpoint its exact location. The Capellans are hiring mercenaries to keep pressure on the Federated Commonwealth troops while the Tong tries to find the base. The facility is rumored to contain several Star League artifacts and many Maskirovka records long thought destroyed.

If the characters discover the base, one of two things may happen. If they share the information with their Capellan employers, the Capellan chancellor may honor them for their heroics and ingenuity. Then again, he may want to keep the find a secret and permanently silence them. The Tong members, meanwhile, would be quite unhappy if a band of mercenaries showed them up.

OPPOSITION

Because the Federated Commonwealth is also hiring mercenaries to fight on Old Kentucky, the exact strength of opposing forces is unknown. Use your own discretion when creating the opposition here. See the Free Worlds League Contract FWL 56608-001-8, p. 56, and Federated Commonwealth Contract FC 56601-009-9, p. 38, for more background.

CONTRACT CC 56607-002-8

BEHIND THE SCENES

Actually, the "diversionary raid" is an extraction run at Sarmaxa's platinum mine. The Capellans have been stealing from this mine for quite some time, but the planet's defenders have not yet figured out what is going on.

Usually, a Capellan raiding party lands near the site of the platinum mine. The raiding party drops off the mine workers, who head toward the mine with a small 'Mech escort. The 'Mechs reopen the mine and the miners go about their business, while the remainder of the attacking force holds off any defenders.

When the defenders get too close, the Capellans evacuate the miners, blast the mine shut, and leave. For more information, see the briefing on Federated Commonwealth Contract FC 56601-003-3, p. 38.

OPPOSITION

A Medium or Large Planetary Militia Archetype defends Sarmaxa. Defending forces may also include mercenaries hired by the Federated Commonwealth.

ST. IVES COMPACT



CONTRACT SIC 56601-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

This contract is fairly straightforward. Hired units are unlikely to encounter any surprises, but the Capellan Confederation has become increasingly bold in its raids against the worlds of its former possession. Furthermore, some observers have begun to predict a major Capellan offensive aimed at retaking the worlds of the St. Ives Compact.

Although that possibility may seem remote, the number of harassing Capellan raids against the small realm has steadily grown in recent months and could portend such an operation.

The receding Clan threat and the Capellan military's resurgence under Chancellor Sun-Tzu Liao have also contributed to

fears of Capellan aggression, prompting the ever-vigilant leaders of the St. Ives Compact to keep an especially wary eye on the Capellan Confederation.

Radical secessionists may pose yet another threat to hired units. Despite the more than 20 years that have passed since the Compact threw off the yoke of Capellan rule, some in the Compact still advocate rejoining the Capellan Confederation.

OPPOSITION

The opposition may be anything from a small group of terrorists armed with personal weapons to a Medium or Large Raiding Party of Capellan 'Mechs, depending on the gamemaster's decision.

CONTRACT SIC 56605-001-5

BEHIND THE SCENES

Although most of these missions are rather straightforward, there are a couple of headaches on two of these planets that will definitely cause problems for the characters and their unit.

Taga has recently been the target of several Capellan raids. One attack started a forest fire that laid waste to millions of acres of ancient woodland. As a result of this and other attacks, some Tagans have begun to wonder whether the presence of 'Mechs on their world has provoked the Capellan raids. In addition, a group of fanatics calling itself the Oakanaya Tong has publicly advocated seceding from the Compact and rejoining the Confederation. This group has also claimed responsibility for several recent bombings in the Tagan capital, New Jakarta.

As a result, units serving on Taga will likely be targeted by the Oakanaya Tong. Tong members begin their campaign of harassment by sabotaging the mercenaries' 'Mechs and eventually firebomb their barracks.

Nashuar is currently the site of a power struggle between two factions. Because neither faction has demonstrated any real degree of control over the planet, any mercenary unit deals directly with a special St. Ives envoy sent to observe the situation.

Both factions are likely to seek the mercenaries' assistance, and may try to turn public sentiment against them or even attack the unit if refused. The Capellans have been secretly bankrolling both groups, hoping they will destroy each other and create a power vacuum that a Capellan quisling can fill. Capellan raids likely occur while one of these factions engages the mercenaries.

OPPOSITION

Use the Medium or Large Raiding Party Archetype for any Capellan raids on these worlds.

The warring factions on Nashuar are of equal strength. Although neither side possesses BattleMechs, they do have modern weapons supplied by the Capellans.

MISCELLANEOUS EMPLOYERS

Though the Great Houses employs most mercenaries in the Inner Sphere, other organizations occasionally hire them for their purposes. The contracts in this section represent a few examples of work that mercenaries might perform for such employers.

CONTRACT IND 56524-010-7

BEHIND THE SCENES

Losing the base to an Inner Sphere mercenary unit represented a major humiliation for Clan Jade Falcon, which became doubly eager to avenge itself following its unsuccessful attempt to retake the base. As a result, Jade Falcon raids against the base are a virtual certainty. Additionally, Wolfnet sources have reported that Clans Steel Viper and Wolf are contemplating attacks on the base.

Federated Commonwealth technicians are continuing their attempts to restore the base to full operational status, but remain far from achieving that goal.

See the **Rhonda's Irregulars** scenario pack for more information on Camelot Command and the Irregulars.

OPPOSITION

Any unit from the Jade Falcons, Steel Vipers or Wolf Clan may attack the base. Any Clan attacker uses Clan rules of combat.

The base may also come under attack from a pirate band that makes its home on another star in the Dark Nebula. These raiders may ally themselves with the Irregulars should a Clan force appear during a pirate raid. Use the Medium Raiding Party Archetype for this pirate band.

CONTRACT IND 56530-001-2

BEHIND THE SCENES

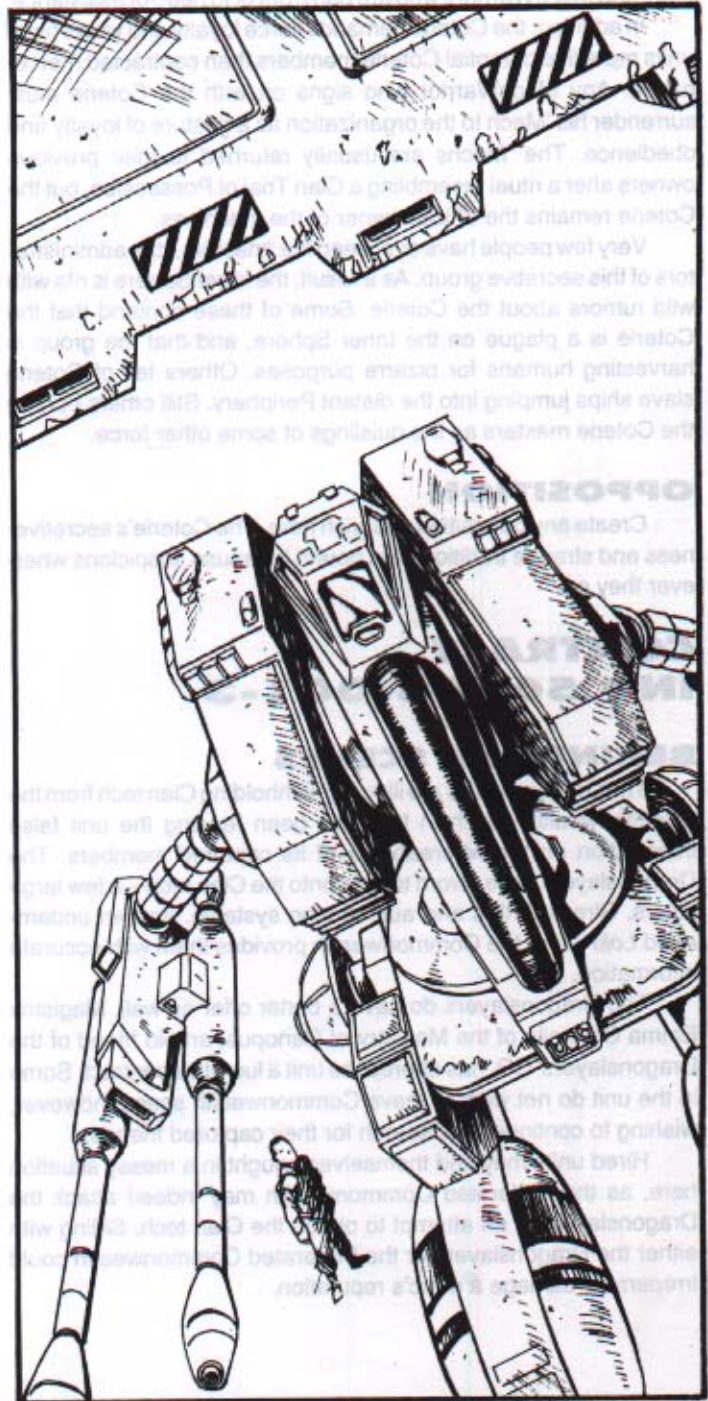
BES received a big boost recently when ComStar hired the company to supplement the efforts of its Explorer Corps. The firm has primarily concerned itself with tracing the path that Aleksandr Kerensky took during his Exodus from the Inner Sphere. Pirate attacks and false trails have hampered this effort, and BES has only achieved limited success so far.

Bentley apparently hopes to find the Clan homeworlds, sell the information to the Inner Sphere, and retire to a tropical world he discovered on the outskirts of the Periphery.

OPPOSITION

Hired units may encounter a vast array of opponents. Pirate bands of various sizes and technological levels, lost colonies of humans with bizarre customs and beliefs—use your discretion.

And should an expedition come anywhere close to the Clan homeworlds, hired units will almost certainly engage Clan units.



CONTRACT IND 56601-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

Although most observers in the Inner Sphere laud the Coterie for its altruistic mission, others have characterized the group as an authoritarian cult of quasi-religious fanatics. The latter opinion may stem from the organization's unusual practice of accepting only units and MechWarriors who are bankrupt or in need of assistance.

In addition, the Coterie demands fierce loyalty and views hired units more like potential Coterie members than contracted mercenaries. Any MechWarrior who signs on with the Coterie must surrender his 'Mech to the organization as a gesture of loyalty and obedience. The 'Mechs are usually returned to their previous owners after a ritual resembling a Clan Trial of Possession, but the Coterie remains the official owner of the machines.

Very few people have ever seen the "masters," the administrators of this secretive group. As a result, the Inner Sphere is rife with wild rumors about the Coterie. Some of these contend that the Coterie is a plague on the Inner Sphere, and that the group is harvesting humans for bizarre purposes. Others tell of Coterie slave ships jumping into the distant Periphery. Still others portray the Coterie masters as the quislings of some other force.

OPPOSITION

Create any opposition you wish here. The Coterie's secretive-ness and strange traditions are bound to arouse suspicions wherever they go.

CONTRACT IND 56603-001-3

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Dragonslayers are illegally withholding Clan tech from the Commonwealth, which in turn has been feeding the unit false information on the whereabouts of its captured members. The Dragonslayers have sworn to hold onto the Clan tech—a few large lasers, Streak SRMs and autocannon systems, and an undamaged *Loki*—until the Commonwealth provides them with accurate information.

The Dragonslayers do have a better offer as well. Magistrix Emma Centrella of the Magistracy of Canopus, an old friend of the Dragonslayers' CO, has offered the unit a lucrative contract. Some in the unit do not want to leave Commonwealth space, however, wishing to continue their search for their captured friends.

Hired units may find themselves caught in a messy situation here, as the Federated Commonwealth may indeed attack the Dragonslayers in an attempt to obtain the Clan tech. Siding with either the Dragonslayers or the Federated Commonwealth could irreparably damage a merc's reputation.

OPPOSITION

The Federated Commonwealth will attack Mogyorod with an entire RCT.

CONTRACT IND 56610-001-0

BEHIND THE SCENES

Although casual observers may view CDP as a group of lunatics, the organization is quite capable and ready to move. The world of Maram is only lightly defended, and CDP leaders believe they can take it with little trouble.

If the revolt succeeds, CDP will quickly consolidate its holdings and attempt to capture the neighboring world of Gillingham, which also has strong ties to CDP. Both worlds will then secede from the Federated Commonwealth. In this event, hired units are offered prime territory on Gillingham, a water-rich world with plenty of farmable land. Of course, the planet's new rulers will expect the characters' aid in defending Gillingham and Maram against AFFC counter-attacks.

If the mission is unsuccessful, the characters may find themselves stranded on Maram or in a Federated Commonwealth prison awaiting trial for treason. See the Federated Commonwealth Contract FC 56603-001-3, p. 36, for more information.

OPPOSITION

Maram is currently being defended by the Maram CMM, a military unit filled with aged warriors in outdated 'Mechs. It fits the Small Planetary Garrison Archetype. Additionally, many in the Maram CMM support the CDP and may aid the organization when it begins its struggle for freedom.

The current military strength of the CDP is listed below.

Size: 1 Company

Unit Quality: Green

'Mech Weight: Medium

Aerospace: None

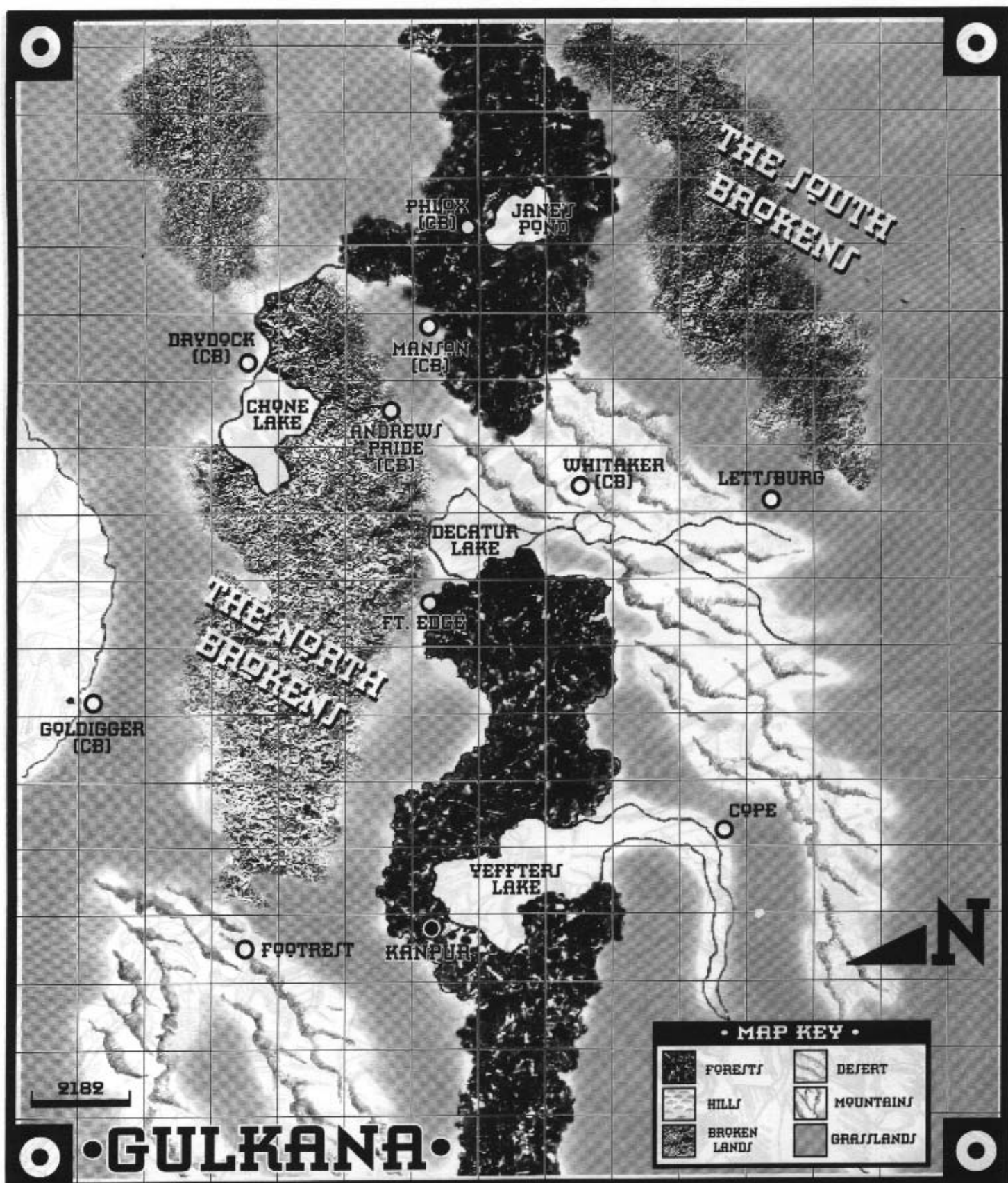
Fighter Weight: N/A

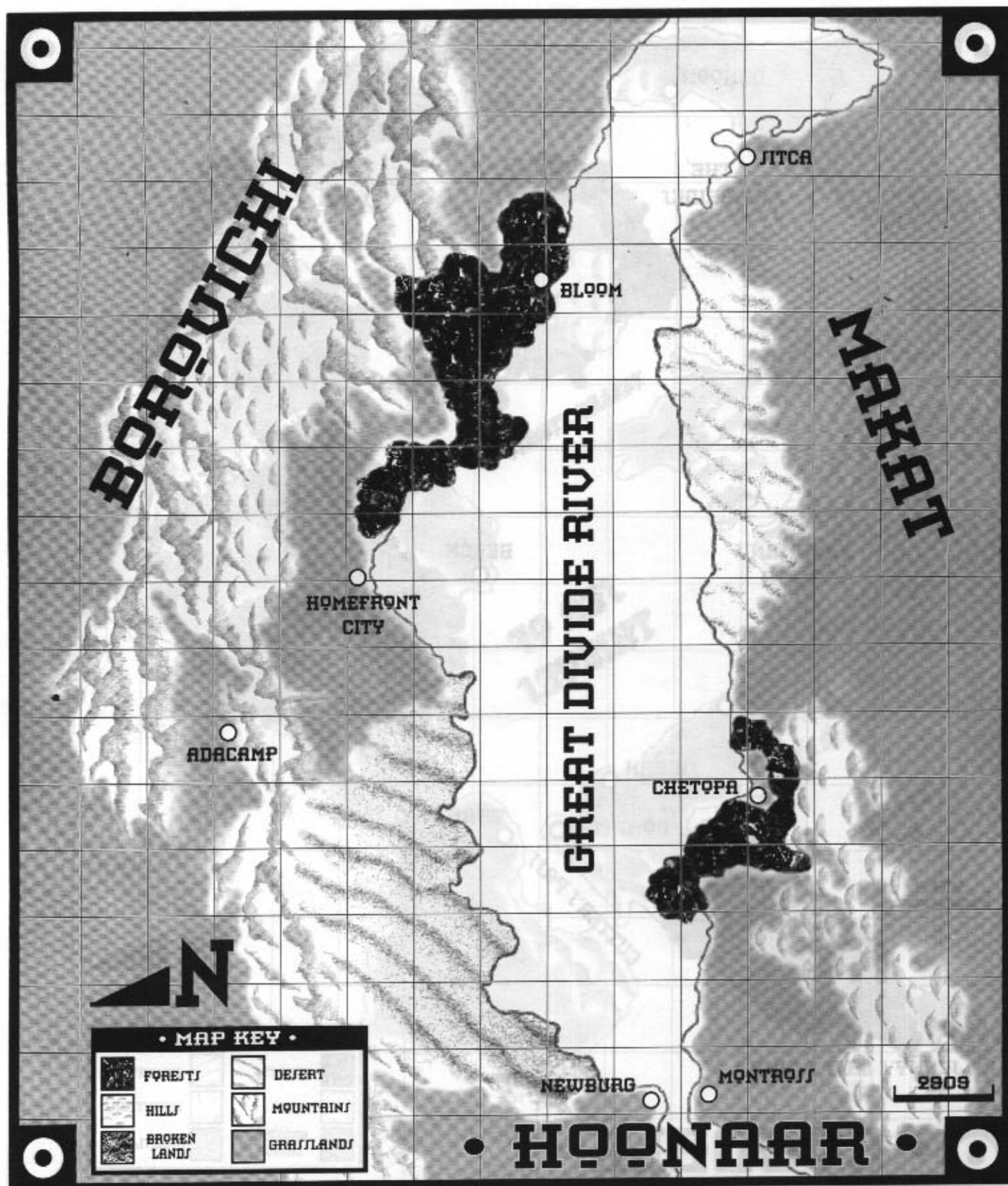
Armor: 1 battalion, medium armor

Infantry: 1 regiment, mechanized mixed

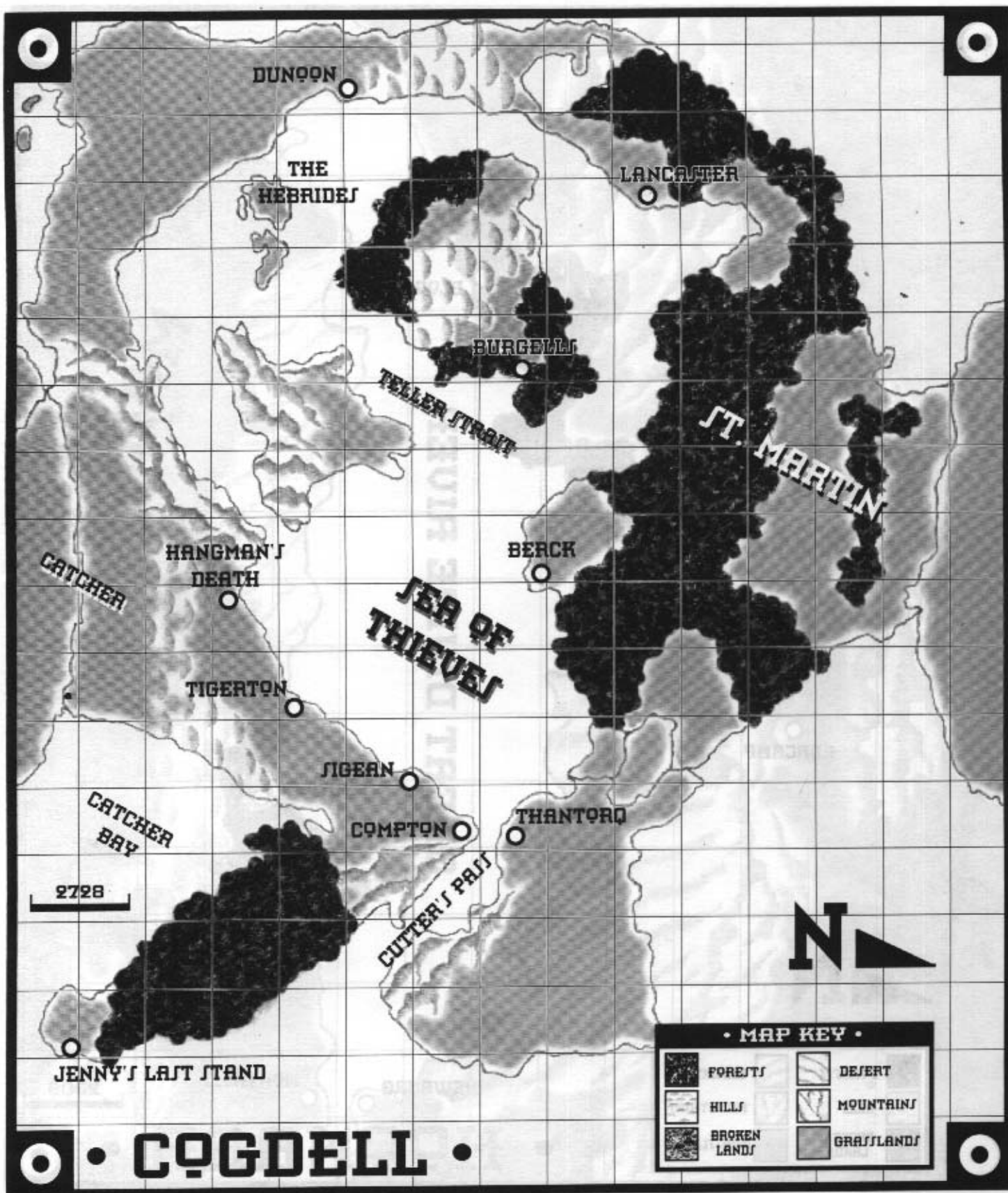
Tech Level: 3025



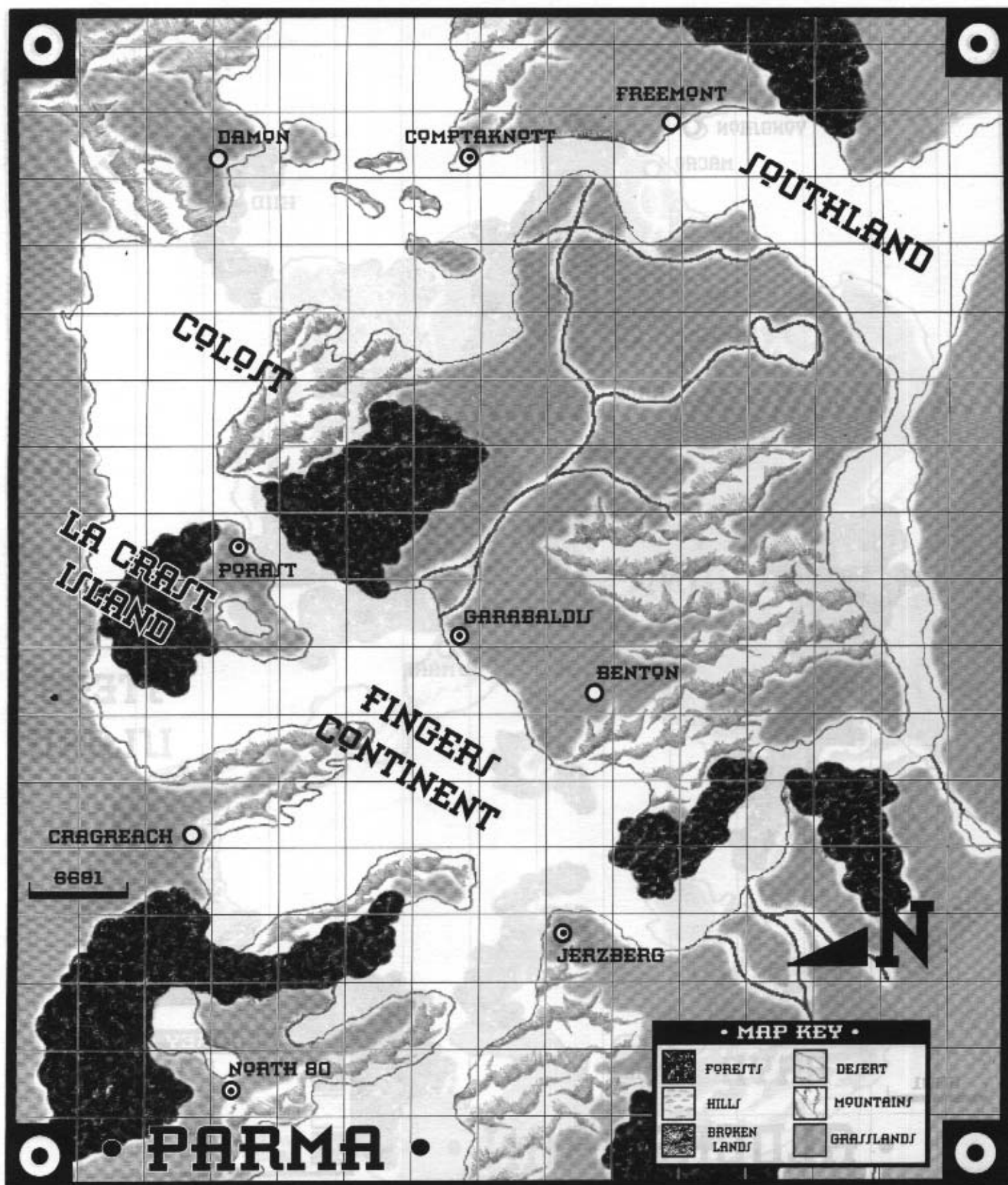


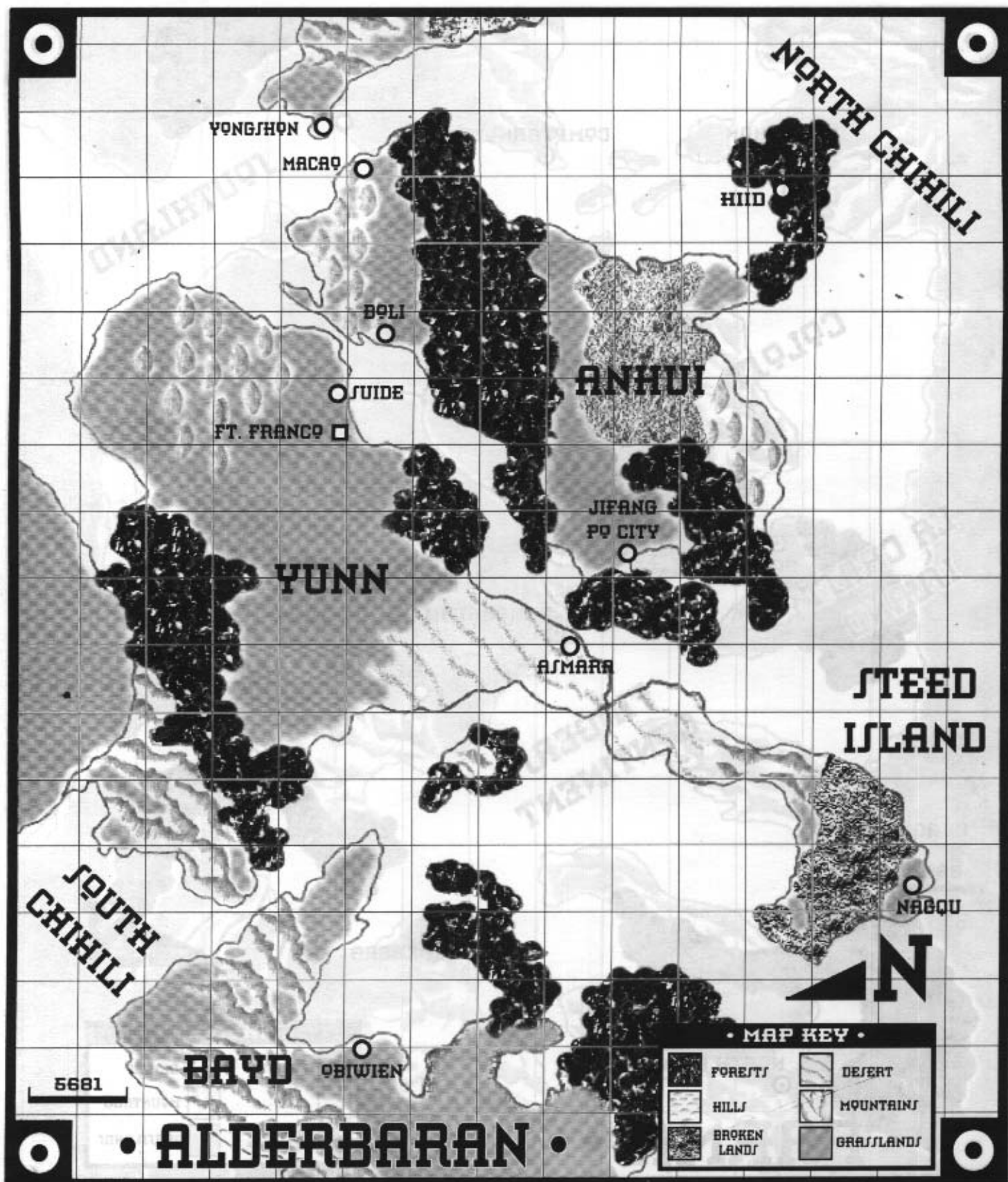


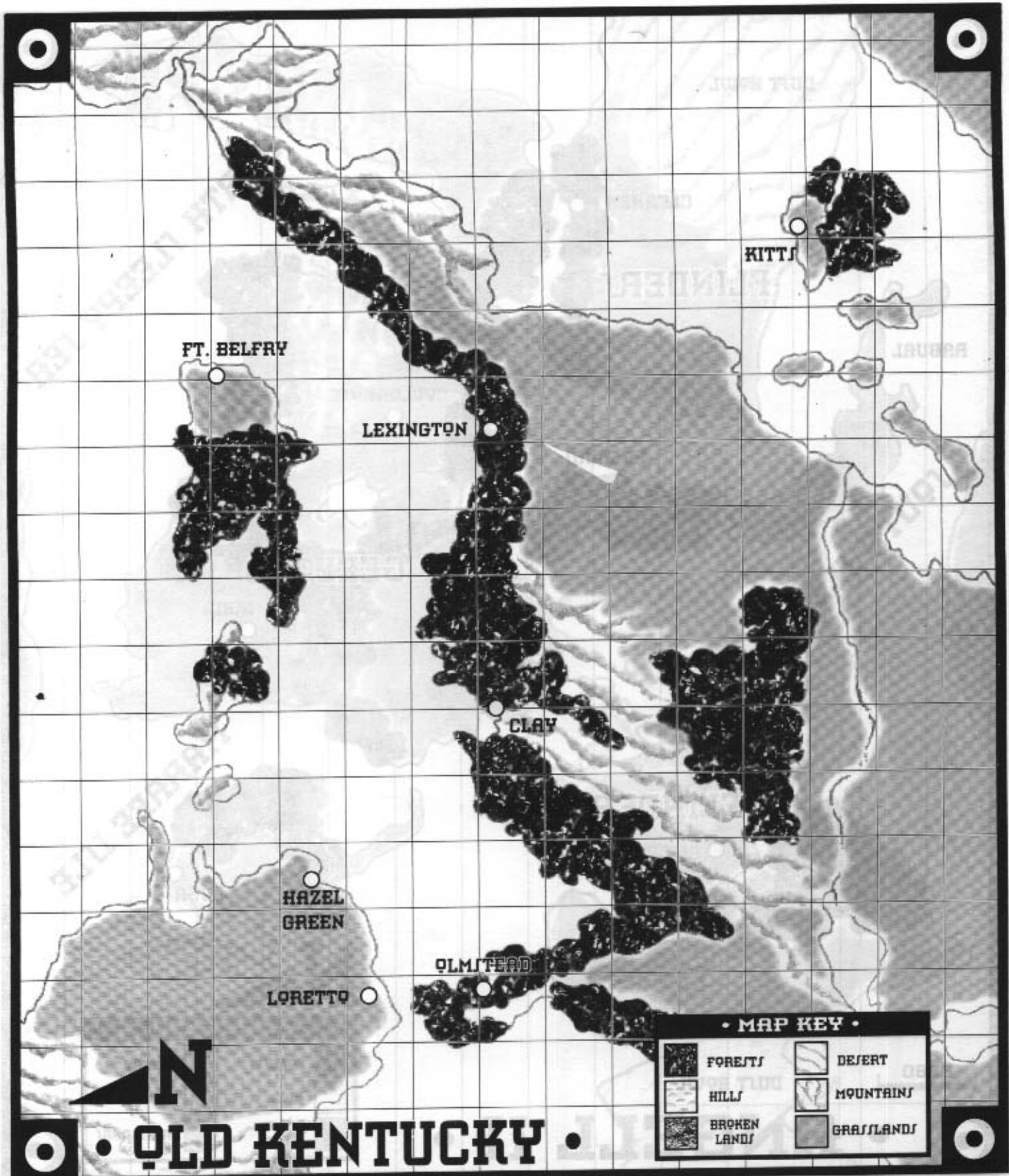
MAPS

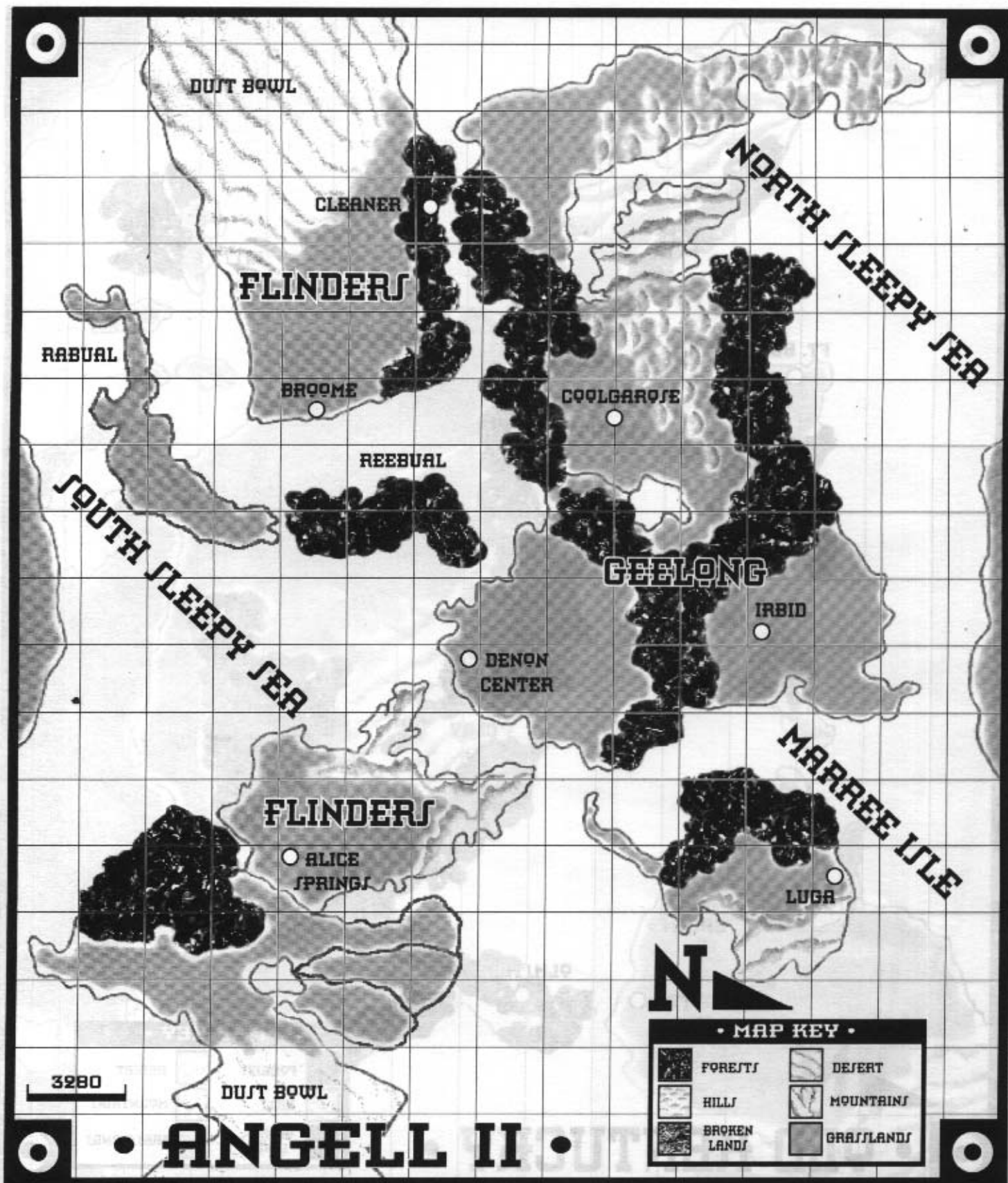


MAPS









MISSION CONTRACT

This agreement executed between _____ (hereafter designated "Employer") and _____ (hereafter designated "Unit"), provides employment for the Unit military forces in the service of the Employer. This employment is subject to the terms and conditions outlined below.

I. Assignment: The Unit is hired for the performance of a mission planned and assigned by the Employer, defined as a(n) _____ mission under the conventions and usages of contemporary military terminology. Said Unit will perform all operations that fall within the framework of this mission, as well as serving the general interests and needs of the Employer.

II. Forces: The Unit agrees to provide combat and support forces, estimated at _____ squads of combat and/or combat support troops, as of the date this contract goes into effect. The Employer reserves the right to terminate the agreement if actual forces mustered at the time this contract goes into effect are 75 percent or less of the originally estimated forces, or if they exceed the agreed-upon strength by more than 10 percent, unless excess troops serve for no more money than originally designated in this agreement.

III. Length of Service: This contract will remain in effect for _____, commencing on _____ and concluding on _____. On the commencement date, the Unit agrees to be located on _____; if the Unit fails to appear by said date, Unit will relinquish 5 percent of its fee. Upon termination of the agreement, the Unit will be discharged from all duties and responsibilities to the Employer, unless discharge is superseded by a new agreement.

IV. Remuneration: The Employer agrees to pay _____ C-bills per month to the Unit. This money is to be held by the Mercenary Review and Bonding Commission, subject to their standard fees of no more than 10 percent, and paid to the Unit according to the following schedule:

V. Support: The Employer agrees to provide the amount of _____ C-bills for the logistical support of the Unit. The Employer will reimburse the Unit for the amount of _____ C-bills if Unit provides its own supplies. Resupply of munitions and other specific battlefield materiel after each major battle or campaign shall consist of _____ percent over and above said supply requirements.

VI. Transport: The Employer agrees to provide for the interstellar and/or interplanetary transport of the Unit. _____ percent of the Unit accepts Employer interstellar transport, and _____ percent of the Unit accepts Employer interplanetary transport. The Employer shall pay the Unit any standard and customary costs to reimburse Unit for providing transport for the Unit or any part thereof.

VII. Salvage Rights: All equipment, vehicles and other materiel recovered by the Unit from enemy forces, depots, garrisons, industrial or civil centers, prisoners, and other sources shall be subject to the following claims and terms of division:

VIII. Command Rights: The Unit hereby agrees to command structures of the following nature:

The Unit is guaranteed to retain internal coherence and consistency of its command structure within the usual limits of this assigned command status.

IX. Battlefield Conduct: Unit agrees to battlefield conduct as set forth by the Ares Conventions. Any violations of said conventions are solely the responsibility of the Unit and render this contract and further payments null and void.

X. Other Terms: Other terms of this contract, agreed to by both parties, shall be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and attached, individually signed and witnessed, as riders to this document.

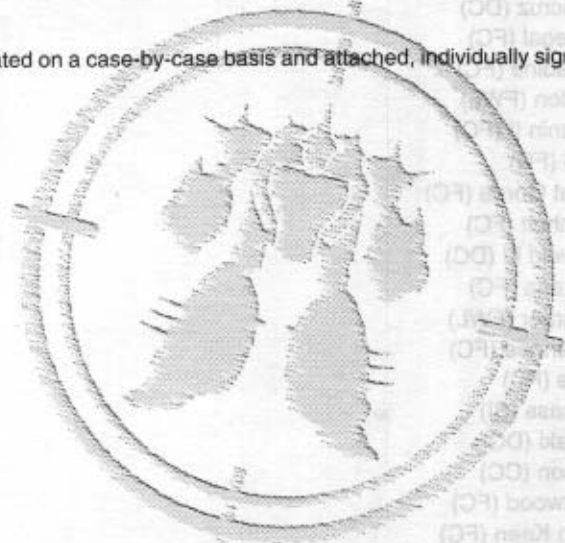
Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____, in the year _____.

Unit Commander _____

Signed at _____ on this _____ day of _____, in the year _____.

Employer _____

Witnessed by: _____



HOT SPOTS

(BY PLANET)

This alphabetical list of the base or target planet for each contract provides a convenient reference for gamemasters interested in conducting a campaign on a specific planet. Multiple contracts are available for planets that list more than one Hot Spots page reference. Each planet lies in the realm listed in parentheses.

PLANET LISTING KEY

FC = Federated Commonwealth
 DC = Draconis Combine
 FWL = Free Worlds League
 CC = Capellan Confederation
 SI = St. Ives Compact
 CF = Circinus Federation (Periphery)

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Aldebaran (FC)	10, 55
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Andiron (CF)	47
Angell II (FWL)	25, 35
Amaudville (FC)	16
Barras (CC)	50
Bassfield (FC)	15
Boondock (FC)	15
Campoleone (FWL)	62
Chandler (DC)	33
Chapineria (DC)	29
Cogdell (FC)	4
Cohay (FC)	15
Colfax (FWL)	37
Conroe (FC)	13
Dark Nebula (FC)	60
Delacruz (DC)	26
Donegal (FC)	20
Engadine (FC)	24
Epsilon (FWL)	38
Fellanin II (FC)	14
Ford (FC)	18
Great Gorge (FC)	2
Gronholt (FC)	3
Groveld III (DC)	26
Gulkana (FC)	1
Hammer (FWL)	45
Hivrannee (FC)	15
Hyde (FC)	49
Indicass (SI)	59
Isesaki (DC)	27
Jacson (CC)	51
Kentwood (FC)	6
Khon Kaen (FC)	17

Korramabad (DC)	28
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Lonaconing (DC)	30
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Loric (FC)	18
Luthien (DC)	32
Madiun (FC)	17, 62
Maram (FC)	5, 64
Marcus (FC)	36
Matamoras (DC)	29
McAlister (DC)	31
McRae (FC)	7
Milos (SI)	59
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Sarmaxa (FC)	9, 57
Skeptana (FC)	62
St. Ives (SI)	58
Taga (SI)	59
Terra (FC)	61
Tharkad (FC)	21
Timbuktu (FC)	23
Wing (FWL)	36
Wolcott (DC)	34
Zion (FWL)	42
Zosma (FC)	36





ANOTHER SCAN FROM
The Dragon Princess